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No. 37

FAMILY WORSHIP;

CONTAINING

REFLECTIONS AND PRAYERS

FOR

DOMESTIC DEVOTION.

BY OTIS A. SKINNER.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY A. TOMPKINS & B. B. MUSSEY.
1843.

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STEREOTYPED BY
GEORGE A. CURTIS,
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PREFACE.

The value of a Prayer Book, as an aid in the devotional exercises of a family, has long been acknowledged by Christians of all sects. But few persons are capable of leading daily in religious exercises, without falling into a sameness which is tiresome, and calculated to destroy that interest necessary to make such exercises useful. Many neglect family prayer, on this account. Others are wanting in the gift of prayer, and are actually incompetent to perform the service in a manner calculated to benefit the heart, or give efficacy to religion. And others are wanting in confidence, and dare not attempt the performance of a duty which they feel binding upon them, and the neglect of which is a cause of painful reflections. A Prayer Book obviates all these difficulties. It also aids those who feel competent to lead daily in extemporaneous family prayer. It gives a variety of topics, forms and expressions, which will greatly enrich their prayers, and be an effectual guard against sameness.

Prompted by a consideration of these advantages, and feeling deeply anxious that an altar to the Lord should be erected in every family belonging to our Israel, I have been induced to prepare this work, which I trust will be found, in all respects, suited to the wants of Christian families. I know there are many excellent books designed for domestic worship; but it has appeared to the subscriber, that the prayers in all he has seen, except Rev. A. Fletcher's "Guide to Devotion," are much too long. Were not that excellent work so expensive as to pre-

clude its general use, it would, in most respects, meet the wants of all Christians. Its prayers are brief, and breathe a spirit of pure devotion; and the reflections accompanying them are highly valuable.

The plan of this little volume is somewhat different from any which the subscriber has seen. It has a large number of services, consisting of Reflections and Prayers, for Sabbath morning. It has also several similar services for particular occasions, such as Thanksgiving, Fast, &c. Besides this peculiarity, each Prayer, with a few exceptions, has a leading subject, and is thus calculated to make a deeper impression than if of a general character. It is unlike others also in the brevity of its prayers. It is also free from forms designed for public worship, though it has several which can be used in such a service. Besides, most other works contain a selection of hymns; but none has been made for this, because most families have a good supply of hymn books.

In the preparation of this work, some assistance has been derived from Wyatt's Christian Offices; Jay's Family Prayers; Brooks' Family Prayers; Furness' Domestic Worship; Fletcher's Guide to Devotion; Book of Common Prayer, and Griswold's Prayers. In a few instances, for the sake of a greater variety, sentences have been adopted from some of these works.

Those brethren who have kindly furnished Prayers for this work, will accept my cordial thanks for the aid they have rendered; and I trust they will find their reward in the approbation of a good conscience, and the beneficial influence which this volume will exert upon the hearts of the people.

OTIS A. SKINNER.

N. B. The Lord's Prayer, and some of the occasional Prayers, can be used, when desired, in connexion with others. For instance, the Prayers on pages 210 and 211 can be used in connexion with the Prayer on page 101.

Boston, May, 1843.

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THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

PART FIRST.

SABBATH MORNING REFLECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

FAMILY RELIGION.

REFLECTIONS adapted to Prov. xiii. Prov. xvii. Col. iii.—The relations subsisting between husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, are the most tender and important which bind heart to heart. And when those sustaining them are uniformly governed by kindness, gentleness, fidelity and love, they enjoy a happiness of more value than all earth's treasures. But, in order to possess these virtues, religion must exercise its divine influence upon their hearts. They must be enlightened by its instructions, sanctified by its spirit, and governed by its laws. In no other way can they be rendered holy, and fitted for the near relations they sustain.

How necessary, then, that in every family the Bible should be read, and an altar of prayer erected; that parents should seek for divine strength in the performance of their duties, and teach their children to honor and obey God; to be kind, courteous, and upright. But, alas! it is not so. In how many families is the voice of prayer never heard! in how many is no religious instruction given! Where religion is needed most, we often see the least; and where religious instruction is fitted to do the most good, there is the least given. O that every parent would say, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

PRAYER.

O LORD, we would, as in duty bound, ever rejoice before thee, in the assurance that thou art

infinitely good, all-gracious, and merciful. And we thank thee that in expressing thy great love to us and to the world, thou hast ever employed the language of parental kindness. Thy Gospel, O Lord, was peace on earth, and brought down to a perishing world the tidings of good will. Even the reproofs which have been administered to thine erring and disobedient children, have been tempered by thy divine mercy! O God, may we learn the sweet and heavenly language which thou hast ever employed—and may we imbibe that pure and holy spirit of benevolence by which thy Son was influenced when he gave up his life on the cross for a sinful world. And as we are permitted from time to time calmly to reflect upon thy love to us, O may we form resolutions in all respects agreeable to thy Divine will. And while we profess to be grateful for the multitude of thy mercies, may we be devoutly anxious to confer some lasting benefit upon our race.

All-bountiful Father, help us to be thankful that our lives are spared to behold the light of this morning, and to come around this holy altar in health. All we enjoy is thy gift; and we pray that we may be led to think more of thy goodness, and to remember thee in all our enjoyments. O make us feel the value of religion, and the necessity of living under its influence. May it sanctify our relations to each other, and render us kind and faithful. May we be a family whose God is the Lord. Forbid that we should ever neglect the means of grace, or suffer the light of truth to go out in our dwelling. Here may love reign and peace dwell. May we neither forget thee in the day of prosperity, nor distrust thee in

the day of adversity. We ask all in the name of Jesus Christ, through whom shall be given unto thee all the praise forever and ever. Amen.

THE DUTY OF PRAYER.

REFLECTIONS adapted to Col. iv. Rom. xii. 1 Thess. v.—Perhaps no duty is more generally neglected than prayer. In this respect, Christians are different from the Mohamedans and the ancient Jews. The former pray five times in the space of twenty-four hours. First, in the morning, between daybreak and sunrise. Second, just after noon, when the sun begins to decline from the meridian. Third, at the middle hour, between noon and sunset. Fourth, between sunset and dark. Fifth, an hour and a half after night has fully closed in. Public notice is given of these seasons, by the criers from the galleries of the minarets attached to the mosques, and every good Moslem, whatever may be his situation or duties, kneels down and prays. This he does, even if a fire is bursting out in his house, or an armed enemy is entering his camp. Mohamed called prayer, "The pillar of religion, and the key of paradise."

The ancient Jews prayed three times a day;—morning, noon, and night. No people could be more exact in the performance of this duty, or look with greater abhorrence upon those who neglected it. In their view, it was indispensable to peace and prosperity. In the times of the Savior, they had become formal, and prayed to be seen of men, rather than to obtain the Divine favor.

While Mohamedans and Jews have been thus distinguished for their punctuality in observing their appointed seasons of devotion, Christians are lamentably negligent of prayer. There are thousands of professed

Christian families in which no spiritual altar is erected; and there are tens of thousands of professed Christians who neglect, almost entirely, the duty of praying in secret. And, yet, prayer is enjoined by the commands of God, and the example of Christ, his apostles, and all the primitive disciples. By his prophet, God says, he "will be inquired of." By his Son he enforces the same duty: "Men ought always to pray, and not faint." "After this manner, pray ye." We have the same command through his apostles. "I exhort therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men." "Pray without ceasing." Such are God's directions to man.

The example of Christ shows the duty of prayer. Much of his time was spent in communion with God. Whole nights were devoted to this. He retired often to the lonely mountain, and poured forth his petitions, where there was no ear to hear, but that which is always open to the supplications of the humble. The apostles were all men of prayer. They prayed for God's blessing upon their labors, for power to resist temptation, for the conversion of sinners, for the fidelity of Christians, and for the salvation of the world. All the primitive disciples were prayerful. It is emphatically said, *They continued in prayer*. They met often for prayer. The duty of prayer is also evident from man's dependence. Everything he has comes from God. He is the Giver of every good and perfect gift, the Father of mercies, the Source of light. How obvious then is the duty of prayer. The ignorant should ask for wisdom, the blind for guidance, the needy for bread, the naked for clothing. "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find," is the declaration of Jesus. Surely, the creature should call upon the Creator, the subject upon the Governor, the dependent upon the Benefactor. The sinfulness of man shows the duty of prayer. Man is a transgressor, and unholy before God. He has forfeited his favor, and merited his disapprobation. Shall he not then ask forgiveness,

and seek for that purity of heart which will render him acceptable!

Let us never, therefore, neglect this sacred duty. He that prays not, has no more claim to the name of a Christian, than he who speaks not the truth. Both disregard God.

PRAYER.

O Thou, on whom all creatures depend, and whose hand is constantly open for the supply of all our wants, we would come to thee in the solemnities of prayer, and dedicate ourselves anew to thy service. Accept, O Lord, our free-will offerings, and enable us, with profound reverence and holy fear, to worship thee, and seek thy blessing. Thou art infinite in wisdom, goodness and power, and worthy the unceasing praise of all hearts. To thy guidance, O God, would we submit our ways, and to thy disposal, all our interests, for time and eternity. We would look to thee for safety amidst unforeseen exposures; for the means of subsistence; for our necessary raiment; for the vigor of health; for fruitful seasons, and for all the supports and comforts of life. Every morning and night would we pray to thee. We would constantly cherish a spirit of prayer, and at all times ask thy direction.

We are dependent on thee for all things. Thou art our constant Benefactor. All our social blessings; all our religious privileges; all our opportunities for improvement and our means of grace, are thy gift. When we were lost and wretched, thou didst send a Savior to restore and bless us; to throw light upon the path of duty; to win the affections of our hearts by a manifestation of his

redeeming love, guide us by his spotless example, and renew us by his holy spirit.

O Lord, how great is thy goodness, how rich thy grace! We cannot number thy mercies, or be sufficiently thankful for thy care! Help us to give our hearts entirely to thee, and spend our days in thy fear. May we no longer be unfaithful or disobedient; but may we follow thy directions, and prove ourselves worthy the favors we have received.

May our children be deeply affected by a sense of thy great love, and ever seek to honor thy name.

Be our guide through this day, and when we repair to thy sanctuary, may it be to engage in thy worship, and to be fitted for all the allotments of thy Providence; and to thee shall be given all the praise. Amen.

THE VALUE OF THE GOSPEL.

REFLECTIONS adapted to Isa. lii. Rom. x. Eph. iii. —The Gospel is a blessing of infinite value. This may be proved by its origin, the character of its Founder, the measures employed for its promulgation, and by its hallowing influence on society. It may, also, be proved by its instructions.

1. It reveals the character of God in all its communicable excellency. It ascribes to him infinite power, wisdom, and love; and declares that in all things he seeks the good of man. It shows with what wisdom he directs, with what majesty he commands, with what power he supports, with what favor he embraces, with what condescension he entreats, and with what mercy he provides for our salvation; it declares that

he is the God of all grace, of boundless compassion and unchanging benevolence, the Father and Savior of the world.

2. The Gospel reveals the duties which God requires. All who recognise a Supreme Being acknowledge that they owe him a service; but the senseless rites of all heathen nations show that nature is insufficient as a guide, and that we need a revelation from God. This revelation we have in the Gospel, which teaches clearly and decisively all the duties devolving upon us. Here, parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, masters and servants, rulers and subjects, are taught their duty; and if they will listen to its teachings, they need not remain in sin, or wander in ignorance. It assures them that God is their Father, and should be adored and obeyed; and that they are all brethren, and should be kind, pitiful, and faithful to each other. Thus, "Love is the fulfilling of the law."

3. The Gospel reveals a future life. Before its promulgation, eternity was shrouded in darkness, and mankind mourned, without hope, the loss of friends. But the Gospel has brought life and immortality to light, and shown that all will live in heaven, be equal unto the angels, and clothed with immortality. None will be annihilated—none cast off forever.

What an invaluable treasure. Truly, can we call it glad tidings of great joy. It is, indeed, *the word of life, the gospel of salvation, the gospel of the grace of God*. What are all the systems of philosophers and moralists, when compared with this! O let us listen to its instructions, imbibe its spirit, and lay hold upon its exceeding great and precious promises.

PRAYER.

O Lord, whom angels love and adore, accept our thanksgivings for preserving our lives, and permitting us once more to come around the altar of prayer. We praise thee, that we are blessed

with renewed mercies; that health, strength and reason are continued to us. We praise thee for all thy favors, and especially for the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. We acknowledge that it is thy richest gift to the world; that it reveals thy character in all its glory and excellency; thy grace in all its fulness; thy mercy in all its tenderness. It is a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path, and sheds its kindling glories upon the valley of the shadow of death.

We thank thee, O God, that it has spoken peace to our hearts; called us away from our follies and sins; directed us to him who died for our redemption, and inspired us with those hopes which are stronger than death. We bless thee for its saving power; for the millions it has converted from sin; for the mighty victories it has achieved over the powers of darkness, and for all it has done in purifying, exalting and blessing the world.

Grant, O God, that its healing power may be felt in all nations; that it may spread from land to land, until the last benighted mind shall be illuminated, the last wanderer brought back to duty, the last enslaved soul be made free. May all the poor find in it exhaustless treasures; all the sorrowful unfailing comfort; all the wayward a sure guide, and all the penitent the means of pardon.

O Lord, may we ever listen to the instructions of this Gospel, and never be among those who shall set at nought so rich a blessing. May we daily drink in its benign spirit, that we may live in peace with all men; may we constantly obey its precepts, that we may be guided in the path

of safety; and may we have the sustaining power of its glorious hopes, that we may not, when overwhelmed by affliction, give way to feelings of despair.

And, O God, may our children receive it to their hearts, live in obedience to its laws, and be sanctified by its spirit.

And unto thee, Source of all light, shall be rendered praises for evermore. Amen.

THE WISDOM OF GOD'S LAW.

REFLECTIONS adapted to Ps. xix. Ps. cxix. 97—120. Prov. iv.—The object of the divine law is the suppression of vice, and the promotion of virtue. Being perfectly wise, having infinite wisdom, God is able to adapt his law to the end for which it is designed. Human legislators often err; with good intentions, they often frame injurious laws. Their wisdom is limited; and what they suppose will be of great service to man, frequently proves a fearful curse. We are not, however, to attribute all bad laws to imperfect wisdom. Many legislators are selfish, and actuated by an unholy ambition. They form laws for their own good, for the aggrandizement of the few, and the oppression of the many. But God is infinitely wise and benevolent, and consequently he can neither make an unwise nor a bad law; his laws are all holy, wise and good.

There are two features in the Divine law which show its perfect wisdom.

1. It appeals to the holiest feelings of the heart. Instead of addressing man as a brute, and charging him with all that is vile and degrading; it speaks to his benevolence, his sense of justice, his compassion, and his love for the race. By this means, it touches the best springs of action, and rouses those powers which render him capable of love and praise. Thus,

it gives ascendency to the highest faculties of our nature. What an evidence of wisdom is here. How easy to do right, when love, justice, and kindness, control the heart; but how difficult when hatred, cruelty, and injustice, exercise their unholy power. What a lesson is here for human legislators, parents and guardians. God does not drive men to obedience by oppressive laws and cruel penalties, but he makes them desire right and love the way of holiness, by waking into action all their moral faculties.

2. The law exercises its control by showing man that safety and happiness can be found only in the path of obedience. It declares that every sinful way is dangerous, difficult, and beset with the worst of evils; and that every virtuous way is pleasant, peaceful and safe, leading to honor and usefulness. Now, as all desire happiness,—as our own welfare is the chief object of our wishes and efforts, the law takes the only course which could be adopted, to make man shun evil and pursue good. How mistaken then are all those who represent the way of sin as pleasant,—who declare that the wicked have a heaven on earth, and the good a hell; that it is here, ill with those who obey God, and well with those who disobey! No error could be greater than this; and while men entertain such false opinions, they can neither love virtue nor hate sin.

Let us be thankful then, that God has made known to us his excellent law; that we live under its blessed influence, and are not left to grope our way in the dark, or wander into the mazes of sin, under a mistaken idea that it affords present happiness. Sin is hell,—virtue is heaven.

PRAYER.

O Thou God of all wisdom and grace, most devoutly do we thank thee that we have been spared to behold another Sabbath, and are permitted once more to humble ourselves in prayer.

Hear us, holy Father, and bestow upon us thy rich blessings. Ever hast thou been kind and gracious, and watched over us with infinite benignity. Thou, O God, delightest in the happiness of thy creatures, and art daily imparting the riches of thy bounty. To thy kind Providence are we indebted for the food by which our wearied powers are refreshed; for the raiment with which we are clothed; for our comfortable habitations, and all the fruits of our industry and labor. To thy Providence are we also indebted for that wise law, by which our steps are directed in the paths of safety and peace. Thy law, O Lord, do we love; and we beseech thee so to incline our hearts, that it may be our meditation all the day.

We give thee most hearty thanks, that it appeals to all the better feelings of our souls, and calls into action those powers which lift us above the vices and follies of this evil world. O God, may we yield our hearts to its heavenly influences, and experience that unspeakable pleasure which is the reward of cheerful obedience.

We bless thee, gracious God, that thou hast suited thy law to the capacities of thy people; and hast so formed it, that its requisitions are not above our powers, and that the service it demands, contributes to the joys of social life; to the increase of our love; to the improvement of our minds, and to the promotion of our highest interests. Grant, eternal Father, that none of us may ever despise thy law; but may its warnings and penalties deter us from sin; its rewards incite us to duty; and its wisdom, justice and goodness engage the admiration of our hearts. O enable us to see the darkness and wretchedness in which

all transgressors are involved, and to bear constantly in mind, that nothing can harm us, if we are followers of that which is good. May we love thy law fervently, and have the peace which it imparts.

Engrave it, O God, upon the souls of these children, and keep them from the ways of folly and ruin.

Guide us, great God, by thy just and holy law, even until death, and then receive us to thyself, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

A GOOD EXAMPLE.

Reflections adapted to Matt. v. 1 Tim. iv. Tit. ii.—The religion of the Bible requires the utmost purity of life. Being pure in its doctrines and commandments, it does not allow its disciples to live in the indulgence of any sin; but calls upon them to avoid even the appearance of evil. Its language is, "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works." "Be thou an example of the believers." "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without."

But why should our example be thus pure? The Savior has given the answer: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." There is no way in which we can do so much to render those around us holy as by setting a good example. In order to be convinced of this, let us consider that example shows the possibility of complying with the requisitions of the Gospel: some of these are thought by many to be unreasonable. How often is it said—no man can love an enemy or forgive an injury. Those, who live under the dominion of the lower passions of human nature, are confident that such is the case. But let them witness the example of one who fulfils the

whole law, and they will then see that to love an enemy or forgive an injury, is, by no means, impossible; but that human nature is fully capable of these exalted and godlike virtues.

Again, example gives a living exemplification of religion; here is the reason why it is so much better than precept. While the latter gives only an abstract idea of religion, the former exhibits it in the life; so that we see it feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and afflicted, overcoming evil with good, rendering blessing for cursing, and love for hatred. Thus all, who set a good example, present religion in its most engaging light; they give it personality, and make it go about exhibiting its beauties and attractions before the world.

Again, example is important, because all are creatures of imitation; we see this proneness in human nature to imitate in the first unfoldings of the human mind. The little child, which is incapable of having sentiments instilled into it, will catch the ideas and conform to the manners of those around it; as it advances in life, its behavior and conversation take their cast from the company it keeps; its mode of speech, tone of voice, and gait, will be copied from its superiors and instructors. This faculty of imitation lies at the foundation of much of the improvement of which we are capable. Were it not for this we could neither learn to sing nor speak; it is this that makes us, to such a great degree, the creatures of circumstances, and causes us to be so easily moulded into the image of those by whom we are surrounded. How necessary, then, that every Christian should let his example shine, and seek, by its captivating and controlling power, to draw people into the paths of virtue, and render them true disciples of the Savior.

By the foregoing remarks, we see how a good example will lead others to glorify God. Let each one, therefore, carefully watch his actions. Let all parents take heed to their daily walk, and set an example which their children can imitate with safety. Let

them teach religion by their conduct; and show, by a uniform life of piety, how sincerely they love and cordially they reverence that God, who is the guardian and guide of all men. Let the elder children of every family remember, that they can exert over each other, and over their younger brothers and sisters, that good influence which shall guard them from sin, and render them obedient. Finally, let us all study to be examples to one another.

PRAYER

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have often offended against thy laws. Our conversation has not always become the Gospel of Christ, and our lives have been marked by lightness, folly and sin. Though thy goodness is uniform, and thy character infinitely perfect and excellent, we have not been thy faithful followers, but have yielded to the corrupting examples of the wicked. Though thou didst send thy well beloved Son to purify our hearts, and teach us the way of life and duty; and though he was holy, harmless, and undefiled, and gave us a perfect example for our imitation, we have disregarded him, and followed in the footsteps of the ungodly. We acknowledge, O God, that by our improprieties, follies and sins, we have corrupted the ways of our associates; we have led them far from thee, and been the means of increasing their love of evil, and their opposition to thy law. We lament, O Lord, our unholy examples, and pray that we may no longer be instrumental in estranging hearts from thee. Grant, indulgent Parent, that we may be watchful,

and take heed to all our ways. May we deal justly, walk circumspectly, and be an example to all with whom we may mingle. May we pattern after our Lord; live in the exercise of his spirit, and like him be meek, humble, forgiving and kind. When reviled may we revile not again; when wronged may we be forbearing; when called to suffer may we be patient and resigned. May our light so shine, that others, seeing our good works, will be led to glorify their Father who is in heaven. May we adorn the doctrine we profess, by a well ordered life and a godly conversation; and may we ever walk worthy the good profession we have made. Save us, O God, from all improprieties in word and action, and may our example always be such as to commend to all men the religion of Jesus.

Smile upon the children before thee; and may they never be corrupted by the examples of the irreligious or false professors.

Almighty Father, may we ever look to thee, realize thy excellences, and be changed from glory to glory by thy image; and thine shall be all the praise. Amen.

THE ADVANTAGES OF PRAYER.

Reflections adapted to Eph. vi. Ps. lxii. Dan. ix. —According to the Scriptures, prayer is attended with the most signal benefits. God is said to hear and answer prayer; to be plenteous in mercy to all that call upon him; to be nigh to all them that call upon him, and to be more ready to answer the prayers of man, than parents to comply with the requests of their children. Notwithstanding these express declarations,

many are daily saying with ancient unbelievers, "What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?" "God," say those who consider prayer useless, "is infinitely wise and good, and can neither be instructed nor made more kindly disposed by our prayers." This, we admit; and it is not to enlighten God, or render him friendly, that we pray. Neither do we pray in order to change the Divine purposes. God's purposes are all good, and were formed for the happiness of the world; and if they were to be changed, it would be an infinite evil to man. But while we do not think that prayer changes God or his purposes, we believe that he does hear and answer prayer. Man is a moral agent, a subject of rewards and punishments; and it is no more incompatible with God's wisdom and goodness, to say that he will confer blessings in answer to prayer, than that he will confer them as a reward for other acts of obedience. That he protects the righteous; that they have a safety, not enjoyed by the wicked, and that blessings are conferred upon the former which are withheld from the latter, are facts established by our daily experience and observation. We know that such is the case, with the same certainty that we know we exist; and instead of being an argument against the wisdom and goodness of God, the facts show him to be both wise and good. It is of no avail to say, "God's wisdom and goodness will lead him to bestow whatever is fit for us without praying; and if anything be not fit for us, we cannot obtain it by praying;" for, as Dr. Paley says, "It may be agreeable to perfect wisdom to grant that to our prayers, which it would not have been agreeable to the same wisdom to have given us without praying for." This is equally as self-evident, as that it is agreeable to God to bestow blessings upon the virtuous which are withheld from the wicked. Love, wisdom and goodness can justly reward virtue, and punish sin.

Perhaps it will be said, "God knows all things; and his counsels are all fixed, and nothing we can do

will produce any change in human affairs, procure any good, or avert any evil." Though we may employ this language in opposition to prayer, no man believes it, or will take it as his basis of action. No metaphysical reasoning, however subtle, can make us feel that virtue cannot procure good, and sin will not involve in evil, or that we are machines, and can have no influence in changing our condition. But there is just the same difficulty in saying, that God can reward virtue and punish vice, that there is in saying he can answer prayer. One conflicts with the idea that all things are unalterably fixed just as much as the other, and no more. It would be equally as reasonable to say, all things are fixed, and it is immaterial whether we eat and drink and till the earth, as to say, it is immaterial whether we pray.

In these remarks, no attempt is made to reconcile human agency with the perfect knowledge and government of God. It is enough to know, that though God's knowledge and government are perfect, he that does right will be blessed, while he that does wrong will be cursed. God, then, *can, consistently with his perfections, bestow mercies in answer to prayer.* "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened." Not only is prayer thus answered, when the blessings we ask are compatible with God's will, but it makes us watchful, causes us to walk circumspectly, resist temptation, and demean ourselves in a manner that becomes children of God. What inducements to pray! God will hear us, and we shall be made wiser and better!

PRAYER.

O Thou that hearest prayer, unto thee do we lift up our souls, and before thee would we spread our wants. Thou hast assured us, that if we seek, we shall find, and that if we knock, the

door of mercy shall be opened. Thou hast declared, that while thou art far from the wicked, thou art near the humble and contrite, and wilt grant them all needed favors. And, O Lord, often have we experienced the fulfilment of these gracious promises. In the morning and evening, when we have offered our petitions to thee, thou hast granted answers of love, given a new elevation to our affections, a new ardor to our zeal, a new strength to our resolutions. When we have waited upon thee in thy house, thou hast opened the windows of heaven, and filled our souls with good.

Thanks be to thy great name, that thou hast established a throne of grace, and permitted us to know the blessings of prayer; to realize that it is our surest defence when tempted; our highest privilege when afflicted, and the medium through which thou dost bestow thy richest gifts.

We bless thee, O Lord, for every opportunity of calling upon thy name; for every increase of spiritual light and strength; for every victory over the enemies of our souls. We adore thee for the wonderful instances of thy forbearance toward us, and that, though we have often neglected our duty and slighted our privileges, thou hast been continually blessing us, and hast preserved us through the watches of the night, guarded us from the dangers of the day, and enabled us to feel the motions of thy good Spirit, inciting us to duty. O Lord, make us more watchful and more prayerful, and grant that we may never forget thee, or forsake the altar of devotion.

May our children love to wait upon the Lord, and duly appreciate all the means of grace.

And when, O God, we have done with earth, admit us to thyself, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

SECRET PRAYER.

REFLECTIONS adapted to Ps. lxxxvi. Ps. lxiii. Ps. cxxx.—Secret prayer has been practised, by the saints, in all ages of the church. The patriarchs attended to this duty with great fidelity; so did the prophets, from Samuel down to Malachi. Daniel, on the peril of his life, prayed to the God of Jacob.

In the New Testament, it is enjoined by the command of Christ: "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." "The Jewish houses contained an upper apartment for retirement, a kind of private chapel;" it is called in one place the "secret chamber." To this chapel the people were to repair, and offer up their private devotions; and not, like the Pharisees, perform them in public places.

The advantages of such devotion are very great. When alone, the mind is not distracted, and there is nothing to withdraw it from the object of our adoration. We do not seek to express ourselves in words acceptable to others, or to guard against confessions, with which the world has no concern; but, devoting our whole minds to God, we give an unstudied utterance to our feelings, and seek for that entire renovation of heart and character, required by him who was free from sin. Retirement, then, is peculiarly valuable for prayer.

Again; it is valuable because every one has wants peculiar to himself. In many respects, all are alike; all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; all must look to Jesus for salvation; all must be guided by the Divine law; all must trust in the arm of mercy,

or live and die without the comforts of hope. While in these, and numerous other respects, all are alike, in others, each has wants that are peculiar. In secret devotion we can suit our exercises to these wants.

Again; it is valuable, because our trials are various There are trials, it is true, common to all; all are tried with sickness, misfortune, the unkindness of friends, and the loss of those we love. But it is seldom that many persons congregate together whose trials are all the same. As, therefore, each one wishes to spread his trials before God, that he may be guided right, and that they may be rendered ministers of mercy; he should go to God alone, and suit his devotions to his peculiar condition. Prayers, adapted to those rejoicing in the midst of plenty and prosperity, would be wholly unsuited to those who are poor and discouraged.

Pray, then, to God in secret; have stated seasons for secret devotion; let your last thoughts, at night, be given to Him, and your first in the morning. If the Master prayed in secret; if whole nights were spent by him in prayer; if by private devotion he was enabled to bear all his trials and resist all his temptations, private prayer must be indispensable to our fidelity, our constant growth in grace, and in a knowledge of the truth. Let us follow our Master in all things. When tempted by the snares of the world, or oppressed with grief, or weary with care, or betrayed by friends, let us retire to our closets, and God will send angels to minister to our souls. What a privilege is prayer to the sick and afflicted! what a blessing to the tempted!

PRAYER.

O Thou, to whom the secrets of all hearts are known, we acknowledge thine omnipresence. Thou art with thy children wherever they bow at the footstool of thy throne, whether in the sanctuary of holiness, the chamber of sickness, or the closet of devotion. From whatever place our

earnest petitions arise, they come up before thee, an acceptable offering. O God, make our hearts pure; give us the spirit of prayer, and may we delight to hold communion with thee.

Thou hast encouraged us to pray, and given the blessed assurance that thou wilt reward openly the prayers offered in secret. Gracious Father! may we retire often from the cares and perplexities of the world, and seek for that strength which will enable us to resist temptation, to endure trials, and persevere in the way of holiness. May we remember that we are constantly surrounded by evil influences; that the examples of the wicked, the maxims of sin, and the pleasures of life are daily effacing our religious impressions and weakening our good resolutions. May we remember, also, that the pride and envy of the heart are hourly estranging us from thee, and leading us to forget thee, and our obligations to love and serve thee.

O thou ever-present Father! May we be watchful and prayerful, and by communion with thee be enabled to resist all temptation and hold fast our integrity, however assailed and tried.

Give to all men the spirit of prayer. May they have such a view of their weakness and dependence, as to be deeply impressed with a sense of the necessity of thy aid. May they ask thee to enlighten their minds, to direct their steps, to sanctify their hearts, and help them rightly to improve all the means of grace. O draw them, most gracious Father, by the attractions of thy love, and make every season of prayer sacred and precious.

Holy Father! Be with us this day; may we

spend it in prayer; in reading thy holy book; in meditating upon thy character and government, and in listening to thy word.

O let the children of this family know the blessedness of waiting upon thee.

Hear us and answer us in the name of thy Son; and to thee shall be given all the praise. Amen.

THE WAY TO KEEP OURSELVES IN THE LOVE OF GOD.

REFLECTIONS adapted to 1 John iii. 1 John iv. 2 John.—St. Jude exhorted those to whom he wrote, to keep themselves in the love of God. His exhortation implies that they had been converted, and that the love of God had been shed abroad in their hearts. It implies, also, that means are requisite to retain the virtue which the soul has obtained; and that, unless these means are used, we are liable to fall back again into the world. It is in Christian attainments as in all others; exertions are requisite to keep what we have gained. A scholar cannot keep his knowledge without reflection and study. An artist cannot retain his skill without practice. We find the same law in the natural world. The stately tree will cease its growth and die, if the rich soil, in which it stands, is removed. We must labor, therefore, to keep ourselves in the love of God, or our hearts will become cold and lifeless, however greatly they may now be enriched by the Spirit of the Lord.

But how can we keep ourselves in the love of God? The apostle has answered this question: "He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love." "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God." Thus, if we keep ourselves in a knowledge of God, we shall keep ourselves in his love; for no one

can see the excellences of his character without loving him with all the soul. If we would keep a fire burning, we must supply it with fuel; so, if we would keep the fire of love alive and bright on the altar of the heart, we must continue familiar with that love which is impartial, inexhaustible and unchangeable.

Again; if we would keep ourselves in the love of God, we must use, with fidelity, all the means of grace. There is the same connection between these means and a Christian life, that there is between the growth of grain and the means by which that growth is effected. If a Christian, be he young or old, neglects reading the Bible, prayer, meditation and the house of worship, he will lose his religion. This is as certain as that he would die if deprived of food. Our lamps must be daily trimmed, or they will cease to burn. It does not suffice that we have been attentive to religion; we must continue attentive. If we would reap every autumn, we must sow in every spring-time; so, if we would make every year a harvest of peace and joy, every year must find us attentive to the means of grace.

Again; if we would keep ourselves in the love of God, we must keep evil from our hearts; love and hatred cannot exist together. No man can serve two masters. He that says he loves God and hates his brother is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

PRAYER.

God of infinite mercy, the Father of all light and Fountain of all good; devoutly do we bless thy great name, that we have been instructed by thy truth, have tasted of the heavenly gift, been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and felt the redeeming power of thy word. Great, O God, has been our peace, and sweet our communion with thee, with each other, and with thy saints. Thou hast refreshed our souls with thy Spirit;

thou hast led us in paths of safety and peace; when tempted, thou hast been our succor; when faint and weary, our support; when afflicted, our hope. Thou hast appeared in glory to our hearts; regarded our prayers, and, we trust, forgiven our sins. O Lord, thou hast been very merciful and gracious, and pitied us as a father pitieth his children.

And we ask a continuance of thy mercy and care. Keep us, O keep us in thy love. May our hearts never again be brought in subjection to the world; but may we daily press forward to higher attainments in knowledge and virtue. Enable us to run with patience the race set before us, fight manfully the good fight of faith, and to live in a constant nearness to thee.

And, O Father, may we never be among those who shall despise the means of grace; but may we pray without ceasing; read thy word, and meditate upon its instructions. May a sense of thy goodness ever pervade our hearts; the example of thy Son be constantly before us, and our eye be fixed upon him. May we ponder the path of our feet, press forward in the way of duty, and when the voice of sinful pleasure calls, may our ear be closed, and our minds turned to thee.

Be with these children; and grant that they may never fall from the state to which they have been elevated; but may they persevere in the path of holiness.

Gracious Father, grant that all thy dealings may be sanctified to our good, and tend to increase our faith, hope and love.

Finally, save all from sin and death, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SEARCHING THE BIBLE.

REFLECTIONS adapted to John v. 31—47. Rom. i. Philip. iii.—In order to see the importance of searching the Bible, it is only necessary to consider the condition of those who have never been instructed by its wisdom: they are without God, and without hope. Look at Greece,—with all its knowledge of the arts and sciences, it had no definite and satisfactory views of God. Therefore, Paul said, in reference to Greek philosophy, that the world by wisdom knew not God! The Greeks themselves were fully sensible of this. Cresus once asked a distinguished philosopher what God was. The philosopher required one day to consider the matter before he gave an answer. At the end of that day, he required another; and so on for a great length of time, till at last the philosopher replied, "It is a question in which my insufficient reason is lost. The oftener I ask myself what God is, the more incapable do I find myself of answering. New difficulties arise every moment, and my knowledge diminishes as my inquiries increase." Such was the testimony of Thales, the wisest philosopher of Greece—a man who added the erudition of Egypt to the wisdom of Greece: he could not tell what God is. But this important information is clearly and fully given in the Bible; that reveals distinctly the essence, nature, character and government of God.

Again; the Scriptures furnish the strongest inducements to virtue and dissuasives from vice, which can operate on the soul. When we look abroad upon the world, we see tyranny often established, vice enthroned, humility in confusion, virtue exposing man to contempt. History, therefore, is far from presenting all needed motives to virtue. But when we turn to the Bible, we find that God is just and holy, and that he dispenses punishment to all who offend against him. It teaches, that to his eye all hearts are open, and that he will reward and punish every man according to his

deeds. Thus we see, that though vice may flourish, it cannot give security or happiness; for there is no escape from the consequences of wrong-doing; justice will, sooner or later, overtake all who offend. What inducements are here to seek virtue, and shun vice.

Again; we must search the Scriptures, because they point out all the duties which God has imposed upon us. They teach, with unerring distinctness, our duties as parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, masters and servants, rulers and subjects. No man need go astray who has the Bible for his guide; it is a lamp to his feet, and a light unto his path.

Again; we must search the Scriptures, because they reveal that rich inheritance which God has bequeathed to his children, and which he holds in reserve for them. How full of comfort is the belief, that we have such an inheritance. It enables us to feel ourselves rich, even when struggling with the evils of poverty; and, in the hour of sickness and death, it inspires us with a hope which is as an anchor of the soul. All support, except what the Bible gives, forsakes us when we approach the gates of the grave. But the Bible never fails; it lights our pathway to the tomb, and illumines even the valley of death.

PRAYER.

Great and ever watchful God; we thank thee for that holy Book which thou hast given to be the guide and hope of man. We acknowledge the infinite value of its instructions; that it unfolds all the excellences of thy character, makes known all our duties, and points the weary pilgrims of earth to that world where all is life and peace. Grant that we may ever look upon it as a full and perfect revelation of thy will; as an unerring counsellor; and as the sun of the moral world, which has risen in splendor upon the benighted nations.

O Lord, may we never be among those who shall regard thy sacred Word with indifference, live in rebellion against its laws, or turn a deaf ear to its solemn admonitions. May we search it daily, and seek to be enlightened by its wisdom, sanctified by its spirit, and governed by its precepts. We acknowledge that it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, and is able to make us thoroughly furnished unto all good works. It is suited, O God, to the wants of all thy people, and adapted to every situation in life; and we pray that we may study it attentively and prayerfully. May the poor realize, that in thy word they have riches of infinite value, and that, though their days may be spent in poverty, they are going to a world, where they will be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and drink of the river of thy pleasure. May the widow, who, with unavailing sorrow, mourns the departure of her faithful companion, listen to its teachings, and learn that the Almighty is her God and Judge, and that in him she should ever trust. May the orphan, who sighs for a guide and guardian, carefully study its pages, and learn that blessings more valuable than immense legacies of wealth, will be his portion, and that he should confide in thee as an infinite Friend. May the sinful, who are spending their days in folly, turn from their evil ways, and hearken to its testimonies. May it instruct all, guide all, and make all wise unto salvation.

Gracious God! we bless thee for the preservation of thy Word; that it has survived all the changes of rising and falling empire, and been

kept perfect through vicissitude and we, and is the same Book which the martyrs read, and by which they were enabled to endure their trials and sufferings. May it ever be our companion and guide, and lead us in the ways of duty.

May our children study this sacred Book, and be made wise and happy.

When our pilgrimage on earth is ended, and we shall no longer need the guidance of thy Word, admit us to the light of heaven, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE GREATNESS OF GOD.

Reflections adapted to Psalm xxix. Psalm xcvii. Isaiah xl.—The inspired writers used the strongest terms they could employ, when speaking of the greatness of God. They also brought to their aid that bold and sublime imagery by which they represented him as making the wind, hail and tempests ministers of his will; shaking the earth to its centre; bowing the heavens, and coming down; having darkness for his secret place, and for his pavilion dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. But, perhaps, there is no way in which we can obtain so distinct and enlarged ideas of God's greatness, as from the immensity of his works. To this, frequent reference is made in the Bible. David says, "O Lord, thou art very great; thou coverest thyself with light as with a garment; thou stretchest out the heavens like a curtain." He also says, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty."

But how great are the Divine works? Astronomers inform us, that so vast is the distance from the earth to the sun, that a body, travelling with the greatest possible velocity, would be twenty-five years in reaching it. They say it would take seven hundred and fifty

thousand years to reach the nearest fixed star; and more than a hundred millions of years to reach the most distant. For aught that is known, countless other fixed stars lie as far beyond the most distant that have been discovered! How vast, then, is the extent of the Creator's works!

But it is not enough to consider their extent; we must look, also, at the innumerable worlds and systems of worlds which God has created. By the naked eye more than a thousand fixed stars have been discovered; but, by the aid of telescopes, an almost inconceivable number has been seen. Five thousand have been reckoned in one constellation. Each fixed star is a sun to enlighten other systems, the same as our sun enlightens the worlds which revolve around it.

If these views are correct, how justly could the prophet say, "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing." What mind is not lost in wonder, in thus looking from the boundless works of nature up to nature's God? How does the soul acquire strength and vigor as it soars from star to star, and surveys the immensity of creation!

What encouragement does this view of Deity afford to those who are oppressed and wronged by the mighty of earth. It gave courage and hope to David when the church was surrounded by haughty enemies, and caused him to say, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble: therefore, will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains thereof be carried into the midst of the sea."

In the hour of sickness and expiring mortality, how comforting is it for the believer, to reflect, that the Lord is a great God; and that in his hands are the issues of life and death. To the wicked, who have slighted all his counsels, and disregarded his laws, how fearful is the thought, that the Lord, who is great in power and terrible in judgment, will smite them in the fierceness of his displeasure, and make them feel that

they are accountable to the King of kings, for all their thoughts, words and actions.

PRAYER.

We look up unto thee, O infinite Jehovah, beseeching thee to give us just conceptions of thy greatness. Thou, O Lord, art the God of hosts! The earth is thine, and the fulness thereof, the world, and they that dwell therein. Thou hast founded it upon the seas; thou hast established it upon the flood. All nations before thee are as nothing. Thou hast measured the waters in the hollow of thy hand, weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in balances. None, O God, can be compared unto thee. Thou art greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence by all nations. But, O Lord, thou art good, and in thy name do we trust. Thou art our Glory and Strength, our Shield and Defence. Thy mercy is built up forever, and thy faithfulness established in the heavens. O God, thou wilt never leave nor forsake thy people; thou wilt be their support forever and ever.

Merciful Father; arm our souls with true courage, and grant that we may never be overwhelmed with fear. When enemies assail us, and the rulers of the earth seek our destruction, may we realize that thou art the King of kings. When borne upon the billows of the raging sea, and the floods lift up their voice, may we remember that the Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters. When clouds and darkness are round about us, and the heavens are clothed with terror, O enable us to feel that thou

canst make the clouds thy chariot, and ride upon the wings of the wind. In thee, O righteous Lord, may we ever hope. May we confide in thee at all times, and never distrust thy power, goodness, or wisdom. May the weak and defenceless trust in thee, and rejoice that the Lord reigneth. May the wronged and oppressed trust in thee, and feel that thou art their Protector and Hope. And, O God, when the wicked flourish, and thy truth is despised and trampled in the dust, may we not despair, or fear that God has forgotten to be gracious, and to execute judgment in the earth; but may we remember that he seeth not as we see, and that nothing can resist his will or prevent the accomplishment of his plans.

Bless us all with a firm reliance upon thy arm of mercy.

May these children stand in awe before thee, and fear to violate thy law.

And may we all submit cheerfully to thy appointments, and trust in thee for protection and eternal salvation. Amen.

GOD, THE CREATOR OF ALL THINGS.

Reflections adapted to Gen. i. Ps. viii. Acts xvii. 16—34.—The Scriptures declare that there is one God, who is the Maker of heaven and earth. "Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves." "God made the world, and all things that are therein." "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Whenever, therefore, we look upon the sun, moon, or stars; upon the heaving ocean, the rolling river, the lofty mountain, or

the extended plain, we behold the works of God,—displays of his wisdom and power.

But the atheist denies the existence of God, and maintains that the creation of the world was the result of chance. Before his views can be reasonably adopted, however, it must be shown that all the productions of chance have a wise and perfect design; and are distinguished for order, fitness and relation to a purpose. These are characteristics of all the works of nature. Was not the eye made for seeing, and the ear for hearing? Were not the mouth and teeth formed for the mastication of food? Were not the arms and hands designed to enable man to labor and provide for his wants? Was not food furnished for the sustenance of the body? Was not the sun created to give us light and cause the growth of grass and grain? Are not rains and dews sent to moisten and fertilize the earth? Thus, we see, everything has its use. Not only so,—there is an inseparable connexion between the various parts of God's works. Did the atmosphere contain more nitrogen and less hydrogen than it does, we could not live on the earth. Were not the digestive organs so constructed as to change food into blood, we should derive no nutriment from what we eat; and, then, notwithstanding the abundance by which we are surrounded, we should die of hunger. Were not the various organs of the body so constructed as to be subjected to the control of the will, they would not be of the least possible service. What a perfect subserviency to use, then, do we see in all things! Everything bears the mark of design.

Now, if chance created the world and all things therein, it is reasonable to suppose that its works, at the present day, should, in order, value and design, occasionally bear some resemblance to nature. But is it so? Do we see it giving existence to a hand, a foot, an eye, or a man? Has it ever constructed a watch, a carriage, or a dwelling? Can a book, a garment, or any piece of mechanism be found, which it has made? If not, how can we ask any one to believe that chance

made this fair and beautiful world? We should think the man void of reason, who should declare that a clock had no maker, or a palace no builder. But no mechanical structure bears any resemblance, in wisdom of design, to the works of God. We must own, therefore, that there is a God, and he is the Maker of all things; for chance produces nothing which bears a single mark of design.

It was the evidence of the divine existence, furnished by nature, that led the apostle to say, the heathen were without excuse. Should not we also be without excuse, were we to embrace Atheism? Atheism! Who can embrace a system, which will compel him to say that blind matter has produced countless worlds and systems of worlds, characterized by perfect harmony, connection and order in their several parts, and when, for nearly six thousand years, it has never been known to give existence to a single being?

> "There is a God, all nature speaks,
> Through earth, and air, and seas, and skies:
> See, from the clouds his glory breaks,
> When the first beams of morning rise."

PRAYER.

O THOU, who art the Creator of the universe and the God of salvation, we appear before the throne of grace, to present our morning sacrifice in the name of Jesus. God, the Father, we adore thee in thy creating power. Thou hast founded the earth upon the seas, and the heavens are the work of thy fingers; all things were made by thee, and without thee was not anything made that was made.

Great God, we praise thee for creating us intelligent and moral beings; for giving us a place among thy rational creatures, and that our souls are impressed with immortality.

Lord, open our eyes to admire thy glorious creation. When we look upon thy works, may our wondering souls exclaim, "O Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth." And when we lift up our eyes to heaven, may we be filled with gratitude for thy care and mindfulness.

Praise to our God, that there is a second creation, more glorious than the first. O, we adore that wisdom which contrived the plan of salvation, by which our fallen race will be created anew in Christ Jesus. We would rejoice that thy glory is displayed in the first creation; but we would greatly rejoice that all thine attributes are far more wondrously displayed in redemption, the second creation. We thank thee that the tidings of mercy have reached our ears, and that from our earliest days we have listened to their joyful sound. We thank thee for thy providential care during the past week, and that we are now surrounding the domestic altar in comfort and peace. We thank thee for continuing to us the invaluable blessings of peace, health and reason. O teach us to pity those from whom these blessings have been withdrawn. We thank thee for the Bible, the means of grace, the mercy-seat, the hopes of heaven, and the ministry of thy Son. O what can we render to the Lord for such undeserved favors?

Lord, we supplicate thy salvation. While we pray for temporal mercies, we would earnestly plead for spiritual blessings. Make every member of this family the subject of a new creation. O give us the imperishable honor of being the spiritual workmanship of our God.

Make these children new creatures! O bestow upon them the loveliness of grace.

We are entering on another week; prepare us for its duties, its comforts and crosses. This day may we walk with thee. Hear us, O God, in the name of thy Son. Amen.

THE MERCY OF GOD.

REFLECTIONS adapted to Ps. cxxxvi. Ps. cvii. Ps. cxviii. Rom. xi.—The mercy of God is a subject on which all Christians delight to dwell. It is their joy in life; the favorite theme of their meditation in health and sickness, and the foundation on which they build their hopes of heaven. Take away mercy, and no star of faith shines upon their pathway, or lights up with joy the chamber of the dying. It is natural, therefore, that all should feel an absorbing desire to be made acquainted with the properties of mercy. And such is the desire of all. They are constantly asking, Is mercy impartial, eternal and free? It gives us unspeakable pleasure to say, these questions can be answered to the entire satisfaction of the world.

1. Nature shows that mercy is impartial. The sun warms alike the fields of the high and low, rich and poor; and gilds with equal splendor and beauty the cottage and the palace. The rain refreshes the land of the believer and unbeliever, and causes all nature to smile in loveliness and glory. The bounties of the world are open to all men; all share its glow by day, and its smile by night; all inhale its invigorating air, and are fanned by its gentle zephyrs. "We cannot go where universal love smiles not around."

2. If we open the volume of inspiration, proof crowds upon proof, to establish the impartiality of mercy. Its invitations are unto all men. Its provisions of grace are for all; and it declares, not only that Jesus died for

all, but that God's tender mercies are over all his works.

The evidence of the eternity of mercy is equally clear and satisfactory; for this sublime truth is repeated again and again on every page of the Bible. The inspired writers dwelt upon it with an ever-increasing delight. It is declared twenty-six times in one short Psalm. It is said to be built up forever; to be from everlasting to everlasting. As certain, then, as God was merciful before the mountains and hills were brought forth, so certain will he be merciful when the heavens shall have waxed old as doth a garment, and been folded up as a vesture. How full of comfort is this truth! No property of mercy is more endearing than its eternity, for it shows that though all things earthly fail, mercy, on which our destiny hangs, remains everlastingly the same.

Mercy is not only impartial and eternal, but perfectly free—free as the air we breathe and the water we drink. All its riches are offered without money and without price. Indeed, God is said to delight in mercy; to be very pitiful and of tender mercy; rich and abundant in mercy; slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. Christian! be not faithless; tremble not with a slavish fear before God; for his mercies fail not. Love him with a full heart; for he is constantly smiling upon you, and showering down his favors. Be not sullen and ungrateful; but let the greatness of his mercy melt your stony hearts, and cause the incense of gratitude to ascend constantly to his throne. In the day of trial and darkness call upon him; for his ear is ever open to the petitions of his children.

PRAYER.

O Lord, thou hast ever been our Refuge and Hope. Upon thy mercy-seat, in the heavens, thou waitest to be gracious; and we, thy sinful creatures, are permitted to approach thee in the name of thy Son. Indulgent Father! great is

thy mercy. Thy tender mercies are over all the works of thy hands. Thy mercy is from everlasting to everlasting. Thou hast concluded all in unbelief, that thou mightest have mercy upon all.

Most devoutly do we thank thee for the rich manifestations thou hast made of thy mercy. When the world was lost in sin, thou, in infinite mercy, didst send thine own Son to die for our redemption. O righteous Lord, make us duly grateful for this unspeakable gift; and may this display of thy grace soften our hearts, and kindle within them a flame of love. We rejoice that Jesus is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; that he will eternally remain the friend of those for whom he died, and raise them at last to all the joys of heaven.

We adore thee, Father of mercies, for having called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to thy own purpose and grace, in Christ Jesus. O for a song of praise! for a psalm of everlasting thanksgiving unto thee, the God of our salvation.

Teach us, Parent of love, to live day by day in humble dependence on thy promises, in cheerful obedience to thy laws, and in a sure and certain hope of a blessed immortality. Keep us, we beseech thee, with thy perpetual mercy; guard us from falling into sin, and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation. From all our enemies, temporal and spiritual, O Lord, in mercy defend us. In all times of trouble, good Lord, deliver us. Enable us to make a wise improvement of all the opportunities we enjoy; and when we repair to thy temple, may we listen to the words of life with attention and candor.

O, have mercy upon our children, and may they never be among those who shall be entangled by the snares of sin, and spend their days in sorrow.

Graciously hear our prayers; forgive our sins, and save us through Jesus Christ. Amen.

MISTAKES IN JUDGING OF HAPPINESS.

REFLECTIONS adapted to Ps. lxxiii. Prov. iii. Prov. ix.—All men are in the pursuit of happiness. This is their being's end and aim. But in this pursuit, they fall into many mistakes, in consequence of the erroneous rules by which they judge of happiness. Some confound it with prosperity. But every prosperous man is not happy; neither is every one who suffers misfortune unhappy. A man may lose his property, be torn from his friends, deprived of his health, cut off from a lucrative employment, and still be happy; for there may yet remain a thousand channels by which peace flows into his soul. Besides, the wounds made by adversity will heal; the heart, crushed by sorrow, will rise through the power of hope. The soul in affliction has been likened to the tree which bends to the earth in storm and tempest, but rises again when the winds are over, and the sun shines in its wonted splendor and beauty.

Others suppose that happiness is to be found only in gay and dazzling scenes; in the splendor of fashion, the pomp of greatness, and the pleasures of the dance; and they look upon all as wretched who are deprived of these enjoyments. What an error! How often are the gay, and fashionable, and great, among the most miserable of earth. In the quiet of the domestic circle, in the sympathy of friends, and in the performance of kind offices, there is a happiness unknown to the mere lovers of gaiety and fashion.

Others, in judging of happiness, forget that man has a religious nature, through which streams of joy may be constantly flowing into his heart. Thus, he may have within wells of living water perpetually springing up into life everlasting. Happiness, derived from this source, does not depend upon outward circumstances. Though a captive in a strange land, confined in a dungeon, cut off from all society, he can be happy; happier than many a king on his throne, living in the enjoyment of the richest luxuries of earth. He may hold communion with his Maker, and meditate upon his boundless grace and mercy; and in the varied employments of his mind, and the raptures of his heart, forget the circumstances in which he is placed.

Happiness, then, is within the reach of all; it is not a blessing confined to the rich or educated, the high or low, but may be the portion of those in every condition in life. Let no one, therefore, be discouraged, however dark and gloomy may be his temporal prospects. "Acquaint thyself with God, and be at peace; and thereby good shall come unto thee." The young can be happy, while engaged in their duties and studies, if they are kind and affectionate, and seek to obey the laws given for their guidance. Those in the meridian of life can be happy, even though they toil hard and struggle with poverty, if they are guided by correct principles, and sustained by the cheering power of hope. The aged can be happy, though poor and sick and feeble, if they live under the sanctifying influence of grace, and lean upon the promises of infinite love. All may be happy, if they will love God and keep his commandments.

PRAYER.

Our Father who art in heaven; we thank thee that on the morning of this hallowed day, we are permitted to approach thy throne of grace. Enable us to come before thee with a right spirit, and in the full assurance of faith. God of our salvation,

thou art good and merciful to all men; the Giver of every gift we enjoy. Thou art the source of all true happiness, and it is to thy rich grace we are indebted for all the privileges and enjoyments of earth. In great love didst thou create us; and in great love didst thou arrange everything for our happiness. We rejoice that thou hast made us capable of loving thee with all the soul, and our neighbor as we love ourselves. Thanks be unto thee, O God, that the pleasures of friendship are ours; that we have social natures, and can rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. The earth is full of thy riches. The heavens declare thy glory, and the firmament showeth forth thy handy works. Thy law is perfect, converting the soul; thy testimony sure, making wise the simple; thy statutes right, rejoicing the heart; thy judgments true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold, and in keeping them there is great reward.

God of infinite mercy, we give thee our most hearty thanks that thou hast opened to us so many sources of happiness; and that though poor, we may be rich in faith and love; though sick, we may be sustained by faith and hope; though strangers on the earth, we may be companions of the meek and lowly Jesus.

O God, may we never forsake thee, the fountain of living waters, and hew to ourselves broken cisterns that can hold no water. Forbid that we should be deceived by the vanities of earth, or led to believe that we can find happiness in folly. Enable us to see that the way of sin is death, and that the wicked are in the gall of bitterness and

bond of iniquity. Guide us, indulgent Father, that we may be directed in the paths of peace; feed us with the bread of heaven, that we may have everlasting life; give us the waters of salvation, that we may thirst no more; inspire us with hope, that we may have comfort in the day of trial, and be sustained in the hour of death.

Preserve our children from the deceptions of earth, and may they never fall into its snares, or be so deceived as to suppose that happiness is found in the ways of sin.

O God, give us the dews of thy grace, and satisfy us with thy mercy; and unto thee shall be given all the praise. Amen.

THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST.

Reflections adapted to 1 Peter ii. Heb. v. Philip. ii.—The Lord Jesus is styled in the Scriptures, the light of the world. And this is true of him in two senses. He is the light of the world by the instructions he gave and the examples he set. His doctrines are vastly superior to all others ever taught. They are a perfect revelation of God, his plan of grace, and the destiny of mankind. Thus Jesus is the light of the world. But it is not enough to have a correct teacher. The Gospel must be exemplified practically, or man would not be able to understand, fully, its principles, or the virtues which it requires. Jesus, therefore, came, that he might exemplify in his life the religion of God, and be an example to man in all things. His moral character was perfect; he was the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person; no sin stained his character; no wrong tarnished his glory He returned love for hatred, kindness for cruelty, blessing for cursing. He loved his ene-

mies, and was good to the evil and unthankful. He manifested no vindictive spirit; not an angry curse dropped from his lips. He prayed even for his murderers. How different was his course from that pursued by man. How common are the denunciations of wrath! How frequently is the brow clouded with anger! How many go about defaming and wronging their neighbors! But the Saviour performed no such acts. He condemned these things, and told his followers to seek a redress of wrongs in a spirit of love and mercy. When reviled, he reviled not again; when persecuted, he threatened not.

Again; Jesus went about doing good. He sought to be useful to the rich and poor, the learned and ignorant, the healthy and sick. What an example is here! How many are the ways in which we can do good! We can feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the afflicted, comfort the dejected, warn the careless, counsel the young, and reclaim the wandering. But, alas! how little have we of the Master's spirit.

Again; Jesus was humble. Though he was the Son of God, and clothed with all power, and had at his control all the elements of nature, he took the condition of the poorest and humblest; he mingled with those despised by the rich, and oppressed by tyrants. What a lesson is here for the proud and haughty. How vain is the heart of man. He looks upon his wealth, and asks, "Are not these the possessions which I control?" He passes the humble in cold scorn, and turns from the poor with haughty contempt! O, pride! how canst thou blind the mind of man! He that humbleth himself shall be exalted; and he that exalteth himself shall be abased.

Blessed Jesus! how pure is thy example! Enable us to follow thee, and imitate thy character.

When Jesus, our great Master, came
To teach us in his Father's name;
In every act, in every thought,
He lived the precepts which he taught.

PRAYER

ALMIGHTY and most merciful God, we adore thee as our Father, and the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And most devoutly do we bless thy name, that when we were lost in sin, and had strayed far from thee, thou didst send him to suffer and die, that we might be redeemed, and made heirs of light and glory. Thanks to thy name for his gracious condescension; for his life of purity; for his untiring love; for his death of agony, and for his resurrection from the grave! O holy Father, we bless thee, that for us he endured injuries and sufferings, the scourge and the cross; and that though rich, for our sakes he became poor, that we, through his poverty, might become rich. O God, may we receive him as our kind and gentle Master; as our King, Shepherd and Teacher; as our most ready and effectual Helper; as our Light, our Defence, and our Guide to heaven. May his unbounded mercy encourage us to trust in thee; his great love, wherewith he loved us, when dead in sin, kindle a flame of love on the altar of our hearts; his triumphant death and resurrection inspire our souls with a hope which looks beyond this fleeting earth to the glories of heaven; his perfect example incite us to every good word and work. Infinite Father, give us, O give us the spirit of thy Son. May we be meek and humble and forgiving like him. May the same mind be in us which was in him. Give us his ardent love, his strong faith, his patience under wrongs, his willingness to suffer for the promotion of truth. May his unexhausted light spring forth into our souls, and scatter their darkness, that the brightness of

thy love may shine within us. O enable us to be like him in all his imitable perfections, and be his true and faithful followers. O let the gifts of his spirit warm and animate our sluggish hearts, that we may rise above the corruptions that hold us to earth, and mount upward in soul, be inflamed with thy divine fire, and burn with holy zeal for the manifestation of thy glory. Teach us to move under the guidance of his grace, and repose in assured hope under the shadow of his wings. May we consecrate ourselves entirely to his service, and be changed from glory to glory by his perfect character.

O Father, may our beloved children be the followers of thy Son, ever admire his character, and seek to have his meek, loving and forgiving spirit.

Smile, O God, on all the means of grace, and may the time soon come when all shall acknowledge Jesus as their Master and Guide; and unto thy name shall be given all the praise. Amen.

THE EVIL OF SIN.

REFLECTIONS adapted to Rom. iii. Prov. i. Prov. v. —The Bible speaks of various kinds of sin. They may, however, be divided into three classes, viz., sins of the heart—sins of the tongue—sins of the body. Those of the heart are hatred, envy, jealousy, cruelty, and revenge. Those of the tongue are lying, slander, swearing and filthy communication. Those of the body are sensual in their nature.

The dreadful evil of sin may be seen by its effects upon the mind, heart, constitution, and society. How many among the most gifted of men, who might

have shone in the senate, at the bar, or in the pulpit; who had talents equal to the highest stations of honor and influence, have been destroyed by sin! How many, who have filled these stations, have been degraded from their high eminences, and prostrated to the very earth by sin! How many too, with hearts naturally kind and amiable, filled with the purest sentiments of humanity, have been so changed by sin, as to become heartless and vile! Upon the body sin works the same fearful changes; it paralyzes the vigorous, makes strong men the victims of disease, and hurries the young down to the grave of infamy! Its effect upon society is equally as great. It renders neighbors deceitful, treacherous and unjust; leads them to the commission of acts of violence and oppression; involves them in contentions and litigations, and converts a peaceful town into a scene of perpetual strife and disorder!

Thus sin is an evil greater than poverty; for with poverty there may be happiness; but with sin there is misery only. It is an evil greater than the loss of friends; for to the mourner there is the consolation arising from the hope of a reunion in heaven.

There is then no father or mother who would not say, "Send upon my children poverty, sickness, and the calamities of life, rather than sin. Only let them be virtuous, let them love and serve God, and I can bow in submission to all other trials which they may be appointed to bear." How indescribably wretched must be those, called to see their children the degraded victims of sin. How bitter, too, is the portion of those wives, who, unprovided for by profligate husbands, are left, with their helpless offspring, to perish with cold and hunger, or to go forth and beg of an unfeeling world. And how wretched are all those in whose hearts rankle vile passions, and who are bound by those passions to the pursuit of all that is degrading and ruinous.

Look abroad upon the earth, and see the war and desolation caused by sin! How many millions have

been slain by it! How many portions of the earth has it laid in ruins! It has depopulated cities, destroyed nations, and brought down the indignation of a righteous God, who, in the fierceness of his displeasure, has converted the elements of nature into engines of destruction!

Is it not, then, a fearful thing to transgress the laws of God? What evil can be compared with the evil of sin? Go not, therefore, we beseech you, go not in the way of the wicked; enter not into their paths.

PRAYER.

Eternal and holy Father, we desire as a family to fall prostrate at thy feet, in the name of Jesus Christ. We feel unworthy of thy favors; for though thou hast been kind and gracious, and hast sent thy Son to teach us the way of life and salvation, we have been ungrateful to thee, and have disregarded thy laws. We lament, O God, that we should so often have forgotten thee, complained of thy dealings, and indulged in evil. We have strengthened the holds of sin, extended its kingdom, and, by our unholy example, led others to despise thee. Parent of mercy, enable us to see the danger of living in sin, and setting at nought thy counsel. Open our eyes to see the true nature of ungodliness; its power to darken our homes, destroy our peace, and make our days wretched. O may we forsake every evil way, and conform in all things to thy righteous law. Give us hearty repentance, an humble and contrite spirit, and a firm purpose to follow thee. Thou art our King; reign absolute in our hearts, subdue all rebellious passions, quench all the impure burnings of fleshly lusts, and kindle within us the bright flame of thy love. Thou art our

Redeemer; expel from our souls the spirit of pride, and impart to us the treasure of thy own wonderful condescension. Thou art our Saviour; take from us the rage of anger, and arm us with the shield of patience. Thou art our Creator; root out of us all rancor and malice, whereby our hearts are corrupted, and implant within us that sweetness of temper which will render us living images of thy goodness. Thou art our indulgent Father; O grant us a firm faith, a steadfast hope, and a never-failing charity. Thou art our Governor; O turn us from vanity, pride, and sensuality. Preserve us from the venom of slander, from the thirst of covetousness, from the deceits of hypocrisy, from the poison of flattery, from the contempt of the poor and the oppression of the helpless; from envy, avarice, and irreverence. Exterminate from our hearts all haughtiness and vain-glory; all injustice, rashness, and obstinacy; all impatience, blindness, and cruelty, and incline us to obey thee in all things. Enable us to be useful in the dissemination of truth and the support of righteousness, and be kindly affectioned towards all men. Give us grace to imitate our Master, to follow virtue, and abandon vice. Make us patient in adversity, and moderate in prosperity.

Keep our children from evil, and never suffer them to sit in the seats of the scornful, or walk with the ungodly.

Pardon our sins, blot out our transgressions, and finally save us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION TO THE YOUNG.

REFLECTIONS adapted to Eccles. xii. Prov. ii. Ps. cxliv.—Religion is important to people of all ages. Those far advanced, need it to sustain them when life is hastening to its close. Those immersed in business, need it to guide and encourage them in their duties. But those in the morning of existence, need it to direct them into the path of usefulness and safety; make them rightly improve their time, and guard them against the dangers of life. Youth is the springtime of existence; and what we sow then, we must reap in manhood and age. Youth, too, is the season when we have the least experience and judgment; and wo be unto those who have not the light of religion to illumine their pathway, and supply the deficiencies of reason and discretion.

Hence, religion addresses itself particularly to the young. It invites them to seek the Lord early; urges them to listen to instruction, to bind God's law upon their hearts, and assures them that it shall be an ornament of grace, a crown of honor, a guide to glory. Its voice is, "Come, ye young, to my bowery walks, my peaceful vales, my blooming gardens, my flowing fountains, my springs of joy."

It assures them, that she is not gloom, not a great funeral pall spread over nature, covering the fragrant flowers, hushing the melodious songsters, and shutting out the light of heaven; but an exhaustless source of cheering, all-pervading light, warming and beautifying the heart, visiting man in his obscure abode, relieving his cares, sanctifying his sorrows, and inspiring hopes, over which death and the grave have no power. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

Let parents and guardians, then, embrace the earliest opportunity which is offered, to teach their youth to

fear the Lord. They can do much by reading and explaining to them the Bible, by exhortation and prayer, by warning and counsel.

Let the young, also, hearken to the calls of wisdom, and bow in humility before those heaven-instructed teachers who invite them to the waters of life. They should not put off seeking the Lord, till sickness or age comes upon them; for the period of prostration by sickness, or by the infirmities of years, is no season for spiritual instruction. Neither should they say, we will put off religion as long as possible, that we may enjoy the pleasures of the world; for religion denies nothing which can truly afford pleasure in any condition or age.

Besides, the longer they neglect religion, the greater is the power of the world over the affections, and the greater the probability that they will become the slaves of sin.

The young, then, should fear to neglect the Lord,—for they know not what evil may come upon them; what illusion may lead them astray; what wrong they may be led to commit.

PRAYER.

O Lord God, our heavenly Father, we would prostrate ourselves before thee, to beg thy blessing, grace and mercy, and thank thee for thy continued care and favor. Thou art wise and good, and constantly watching over all thy people. The aged and the young are alike the recipients of thy grace, and the objects of thy regard. Thou didst send thy Son to give himself a ransom for all men; to die, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. Gracious Father, make us grateful for this gift of thy love, and enable us to realize the riches of thy mercy, in thus pro-

viding for our salvation. Especially do we pray for the young, that they may be so affected by thy great goodness, as to give themselves up to thee, and dedicate themselves entirely to thy service. O God, grant that they may realize the importance of religion to them, and feel how necessary it is to guard them against temptation, direct them into the paths of usefulness and true honor, and rightly develop those powers which God has given them. Enable them to see that early piety is the most acceptable sacrifice which can be offered to God, and that nothing can give them so fair a promise of happiness and usefulness. Guard them against all improper habits, and grant that they may never be in bondage to sin. Enlighten their minds with thy truth; sanctify their hearts with thy grace; enable them to see the excellency of thy word, and to feel that wisdom's ways are pleasant and peaceful.

Infinite Father, may they be industrious and frugal, never waste their time in idleness, or their substance in vicious indulgences. Give them wisdom to choose their employments and form their plans. Give them prudence in the management of their temporal and spiritual concerns, and zeal in the performance of all their duties. May they always remember, that the heart was formed for sympathy, and that they should never be cruel or oppressive. Help them to feel for those subject to distress, and be ready to perform all those kind offices which the afflicted may need. Forbid that they should be lifted up with pride, turn a deaf ear to thy instructions, or have that self-sufficiency which shall close their hearts against thy word. O God, may they feel humble, realize

their dependence, and listen to the experience and wisdom of their superiors. Guide them even until death, and at last receive them to thyself.

Let thy blessing rest upon all men; upon those of every age, character and pursuit. Enlighten the ignorant, save the sinful, instruct the erring, support the aged, comfort the afflicted; and finally receive all to thyself, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

FAMILY PRAYER.

REFLECTIONS adapted to Eph. iv. 1 Tim. ii. Joshua xxiv.—"If family prayer is important, why was it not enjoined by the Saviour?" is a question frequently asked by the candid and serious. In order to remove the apparent difficulty which it presents, it is only necessary to observe, 1st. That the duty of prayer was urged by him in the most faithful manner, and its advantages were clearly and distinctly stated. 2d. That family prayer was common among all the religionists of his times. 3d. That it was also common among his disciples.

From these facts, it is evident, that Jesus did indirectly enjoin family prayer; for repeated commands to pray, given under such circumstances, must be regarded as an indirect enjoining of the customary modes of prayer. This conclusion is confirmed by the fact, that Jesus never disapproved of family prayer, either among the Jews or his disciples, though he did disapprove of the long, hypocritical prayers of the former. It is confirmed also by the custom of the apostles, who prayed with those families among whom they tarried. Besides, Paul says, "Pray without ceasing," which Macknight supposes to mean, *observe the stated seasons of prayer*. This interpretation of the command he confirms by Luke xxiv. 53. "They were continually in

the temple praising God," he says, "means, that they resorted to the temple at the time of the morning and evening sacrifice; and, according to the custom of the Jews, offered their prayers and praises while the incense was burning. See Rev. viii. 3. And as the morning and evening sacrifice is called the continual burnt offering, Exod. xxix. 42, they who regularly observed that season of prayer, were said to pray *continually*, and *night and day*. Acts xxvi. 7."

The New Testament, then, is decidedly in favor of family prayer. Christ indirectly enjoined it; and if the general custom of his primitive disciples is any indication of his mind, he looked upon it as one of the most efficient means of grace which could be employed.

Family prayer! how numerous are its advantages. It regulates the temper of parents, and gives efficiency to their wholesome rules. It causes children to venerate their parents, and willingly bow to their authority. It gives dignity to the character; strength to resist temptation, and fortitude to bear up under the trials of life. Where is God's blessing more needed than in the family circle? And shall not that blessing be earnestly and devoutly craved? Let every family consider.

PRAYER.

Merciful Father, we desire to seek thy face, and to wait upon thee in the duties of thy worship; entreating thy gracious favor with our whole hearts, that we may do all as we ought, with good acceptance to our God. And to whom should we go but unto thee, the God of all grace, and the Fountain of all goodness, who art able to do abundantly for us, even above all we can ask or think; and who hast declared thy willingness to be importuned by us, and thy readiness to hear and answer us, in those things which we beg at

thy bountiful hand? O let our prayer be set before thee as incense, and the lifting up of our hands be as an evening sacrifice.

God of all the families of the earth! Devoutly do we thank thee that we are permitted to sur round this altar, and hold communion with the Father of our spirits. And we pray that we may never neglect a privilege so great, or a means of spiritual culture so well adapted to our nature. O Father, as a family may we ever delight to serve thee, to call upon thy name, and walk in thy statutes. Help us to realize that religion hallows the ties which bind us together; makes us kind, courteous, pitiful and tender-hearted, and renders it a pleasure to do as we would be done by. And we beseech thee, O Lord, to grant that religion may ever be our guide; that we may ever live under its benign influence, and that it may guide each one of us in the way of holiness. May we ever delight to call upon thy name, and may we daily seek thy guidance, that we may never stray from thee, or forget our obligations. Engrave thy laws upon our hearts, and inspire us with that love which is stronger than death. When afflicted, may we come to thee in prayer; when tempted, may we call on thee for strength to resist the seductions of sin; and when weary with care, may our spirits be refreshed by communion with thee.

O God, may these children live sober and prayerful lives, and be useful members of society.

Hear us, O Father, in the name of Jesus Christ; and to thee shall be rendered unceasing praise. Amen.

THE EXCELLENCY OF GOD'S LAW.

REFLECTIONS on Ps. cxix. 1—16. Prov. xxviii. Jer. xxxi.—"O how I love thy law," says the devout Psalmist. "It is my meditation all the day!" "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." But why did he prize this law so highly? In what do its excellences consist? In order to answer these inquiries, we have only to consider its characteristics.

1. It is binding alike upon all men; and gives no rights or privileges to one, which it refuses to another. How different from human laws. Almost every nation has laws which are unequal. Look, for instance, at the Spartans; they drove the Helots to constant toil, as a man drives his beast. They were often made drunk, that the children of their masters might abhor intemperance. They were often murdered in mere wantonness. Two thousand of these wronged and oppressed people disappeared at one time, and none called their murderers to an account. Now, laws which justify such cruelties, and outrage all natural rights, can be loved by no good man; and had the Divine law been like these David could never have pronounced it excellent. God's law, then, regards all as equal; requires of all the same duties, and pays no respect to rank or nation in the infliction of punishment. It recognises no difference among men, but that created by moral worth.

2. The Divine law is excellent because just. Should a king demand twice the labor his subjects are able to perform, and then punish them for a non-compliance with his requisitions, we should pronounce him shamefully unjust. The whole world have united in condemning Pharaoh for imposing burdens upon the Israelites greater than they could bear, and for punishing them because they were crushed by the insupportable load. God's law has no such injustice. It makes no unreasonable demand, and inflicts no unjust punish-

ment. Is it not excellent? How many millions of our race would rejoice could the human laws, under which they live, be made to correspond with this! What vast multitudes are ground to the dust by unjust laws!

3. The Divine law is excellent because wise. Its arrangements are all suited to the end it seeks to accomplish. How unlike the laws of man! Many of these are unwise, and defeat the end for which they were framed. Lycurgus devised a plan for the formation of a commonwealth, which should be free from the evils that paralyzed the governments of his day. But he was defeated, because he sought to form a warlike people, and strengthen their bodies, to the neglect of their minds. His plan resulted in making the Spartans rough and ferocious, and ignorant of those moral and intellectual attainments, which tend to soften the manners, polish the understanding, improve the heart, and render the behavior courteous and obliging. God's law has no such defect. None of its rules work injuriously, but all combine to produce the great end for which it was given.

Thus, his law is equal, just and wise, calculated to guard against all evil, and direct man in the path of safety and peace. Let us, then, be thankful for this great gift, and yield a cheerful compliance with all its requisitions. Truly, can we say, "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, just and good."

PRAYER.

Supremely great and infinitely glorious Lord; we adore thee as that Being before whom angels bow, and to whom all the hosts of heaven render unceasing praise. Thou, O God, art worthy the adoration of all created intelligences, of rulers and subjects, of angels and the spirits of the just; for thou art good, and thy mercy is over all.

We acknowledge thee as the Supreme Law-

giver of heaven and earth; and we rejoice to know that thy laws are all righteous; that they are formed by infinite wisdom, and designed to secure the highest happiness of the whole world. We bless thee that they are impartial and just, and calculated to equalize the condition of society, and bind thy children together by the strongest ties which can link heart to heart. We praise thee for their perfect adaptation to our state and wants, and give thee most hearty thanks for their power to guard from sin, and secure to individuals, families and nations, the greatest blessings which can be enjoyed on earth. We thank thee for their restraining power; that they warn us of danger, and unfold the fearful consequences of sin. We also thank thee for the liberty which they give; and that, while they require a uniform obedience, they secure a freedom which lifts us far above everything calculated to enslave. We rejoice, O God, that thou art not an arbitrary and unrighteous Ruler, imposing duties that are irksome and useless. We rejoice that thy laws are all wise and good; that they are the security and happiness of all who yield to them a cheerful obedience.

Grant, indulgent Father, that we may obey thee in all things. May rulers and all in authority acknowledge thee in all their ways, and ever remember that they are accountable to thee. Guard all and guide all in the way of peace, and enable all to keep thy laws.

Remember in much mercy these children, and write thy laws deeply upon their hearts.

Accept our thanksgivings, in the name of Jesus

Christ, and finally admit us to thyself in heaven. Amen.

THE FAITHFULNESS OF JESUS.

REFLECTIONS adapted to Luke xv. John x. 1—18. John xviii. 1—14.—The faithfulness with which the Saviour fulfilled the office of his mission, is one of the most endearing traits in his character. His numerous instances of devotion are affecting beyond expression; his tears of sympathy at the grave of Lazarus, and on his entrance into Jerusalem, display, in lively colors, the tenderness of his heart; his perpetual acts of self-sacrifice exemplify the ardor of his love and the riches of his grace; but his untiring faithfulness is an excellency which displays the perfection of his character more fully, perhaps, than any other trait. It may be considered, in a measure, the union of all others. His Father's work—the work which was given him to do—the end for which he came into the world, never for a moment ceased to occupy his mind. "I have a work to do," he says, "which the world knows not of." And the desire, which prevailed over all others, was, that this work might be faithfully performed. If assailed by temptations, by the seductions of power, ambition, and universal dominion, he turns from them, with calm contempt. If "despised and rejected of men," doomed to unparalleled hardships and sufferings, "to be the jest of the Pharisee, the derision of the scribe," and the victim of malignity, he bears the whole with cheerful submission, and pursues, without murmuring, the great end he was sent to accomplish. Confident of consummating the dispensations of the Most High, and delivering up his kingdom with joy and not with grief, he never tires in his work, he never falters by the way; but he moves on with unwearying faithfulness, till the last duty is performed, and the last pang is suffered, when, in the final moment of expiring

life, he exclaims, "It is finished," and "bows his head" in death.

To this faithfulness frequent reference is made in the Bible. Isaiah says—"He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law." St. Paul says—"He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." He also says—Christ "was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house." He is called "a faithful High Priest," and "the faithful witness." He represents himself as going after the lost until he finds them. What a reason for confidence and hope! Fear not, Christian; Jesus will accomplish the great work for which he was set apart; he will restore all sinners; he will purify all hearts; he will destroy death, and raise all from the grave, to a state of endless life and infinite joy. Be entreated, not only to confide in him, but to imitate his example. Be faithful in all the relations you sustain—faithful to God—faithful to his religion—faithful to all your friends; and you shall realize that the "Lord preserveth the faithful," and that a "faithful man shall abound with blessings."

PRAYER.

Supremely great and ever blessed Father, we would humble ourselves before thee in prayer, and tender to thee the grateful acknowledgments of our hearts, for the many mercies of thy hand. Thou hast ever been gracious and kind, and when we were ignorant and vile, and bound in the chains of a cruel servitude, thou didst send thy only begotten Son, to give himself a ransom for our sins. Glory be to thy great name for this unspeakable gift. Thou hast laid help on one able and mighty to save; one clothed with all the wisdom and power requisite to accomplish the holy object of his mission. We rejoice, O Lord,

in our Redeemer; in his love, which was stronger than death; in his benevolence, which no ingratitude could weary; in his mercy, which extended to all men; in his humility, which made him one with the lowly and poor; and in his fidelity, which led him forward amid every discouragement. Especially do we rejoice, that he will never tire in the work of redemption; that he will fail not nor be discouraged, till he has set judgment in the earth; till he has restored the last wanderer, wiped the tears from every eye, conquered death, and exalted all to a state of endless glory. Thanks, merciful Father, to thy glorious name, for the rich blessings procured by the ministry and death of thy Son, and for the bright prospects unfolded by his doctrine and resurrection.

In our Redeemer, indulgent Lord, we find whatever can soothe, quicken and comfort us. Through him we have light in our darkness, strength in our weakness, fortitude in our afflictions, and hope in death. He has brought to us those great truths which lead us to thee, purify our hearts, and translate us from the regions of wo to the kingdom of joy. He has opened the way which leads to heaven, and, by his own death and resurrection, removed from our hearts all painful apprehensions, and given us a confidence which death cannot destroy.

Grant, O holy Father, that the image of our suffering and gracious Lord may be ever with us, inciting us to higher and still higher attainments, and stimulating us to untiring faithfulness in the discharge of all our duties.

May his grace win the hearts of our children,

and attract them away from all the vanities of earth. May they love and follow him through life.

Hear us, O God, and give us abundant answers of peace; and to thee, through our crucified and risen Master, shall be rendered unceasing praise. Amen.

THE WAY TO SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.

REFLECTIONS adapted to John iii. Acts viii. 26—40. Ps. cxxix. 33—48.—At the time of our Saviour's ministry, the Jews boasted of the flourishing state of theological learning among them. There were members of their Sanhedrim whom they called the beauties of their wisdom and the glory of their law. Jesus, instead of reproaching them for this knowledge, encouraged the study of the Scriptures. His language was—*Search the Scriptures.* This is a command binding upon all men, and what cannot be neglected without a violation of God's law. But how should the Scriptures be searched? We answer,

1. They should be searched *diligently.* The command of the Saviour implies something more than a casual and hasty reading of them. The word rendered *search* signifies to search diligently. Homer, it has been said, applies it to a lion deprived of his whelps, who scours the plain, and searches for the footsteps of the man that has robbed him. St. Chrysostom, speaking of the word search, says, "It is a metaphor taken from those who dig deep and search for metals in the bowels of the earth. They look for the bed where the metal lies, and break every clod, and sift and examine the whole, in order to discover the ore." The Scriptures, therefore, should be searched assiduously. We must compare passage with passage; we must ascertain the scope of the subject, and the design of the

speaker. When we have done this, doubtful phraseology will become plain, and what, under other circumstances, would be dark and difficult, will be easily understood.

2. We must search the Scriptures with a desire to be instructed in the truth. Many read the Bible with great attention; but it is not with a desire to learn what it teaches. They read it, in order to find proof of some preconceived opinion, to substantiate a creed which they have adopted. In this way, the Scriptures are tortured and twisted to favor the views of opposing sects. This is one reason why the Bible is made to speak so many different languages. Too many read it to obtain proof of old errors, rather than to learn new truths. We must read it, with a desire to know the truth, if we would be benefitted by reading. It should be our earnest prayer to know what God has said; but who can pray for the guidance of the Spirit in studying the Bible, when it is never opened except to establish a long-cherished opinion!

3. We must read the Scriptures with a deep conviction of their inestimable value. We should never open them, as we would a work of the imagination, or the history of a nation, or even the records of the Christian church. They are a revelation of God's will and purpose; they make known our duty and destiny, and they disclose the infinite riches of divine grace. Their precepts are all perfect, and when obeyed lead man into paths of safety and peace. The histories they contain are full of instruction, and show how God, in all ages of the world, has rewarded the good and punished the bad. What a book, then, is the Bible! It is indeed the pearl of great price—a treasure of indescribable worth. When we read it, therefore, we should always remember, that God is speaking to us concerning the highest interests of time and eternity; and we should listen to its instructions, as our authoritative guide in all the concerns of faith and practice.

PRAYER.

O Lord, our God, we, thy rational and accountable subjects, desire to bow before thee in the name of Jesus Christ, to adore thy goodness, to praise thee for thy care, and to rejoice in thy great salvation. Thy kindness and mercy, O God, are infinite; thy grace is inexhaustible. What streams of bliss are constantly flowing from thee. From generation to generation thou hast gladdened the hearts of thy servants.

We thank thee that thou hast heard our prayers, refreshed us with sleep, continued us in the enjoyment of health, and permitted us to gather once more around this altar. Thy mercies are new every morning, and fresh every evening.

Eternal Father, we bless thee for all thy gifts to man; but especially for the gift of that sacred Book, in which thou hast revealed thy perfections and government; given us wise and perfect rules of duty, and revealed the glories of heaven. O enable us duly to appreciate this great gift; to realize the excellency of its doctrines, the wisdom of its precepts, and the value of its promises. We acknowledge with the highest gratitude the benignity of its spirit, the consoling nature of its hopes, and its power to save the sinful, guide the wandering, soften the hearts of the obdurate, humble the proud, and comfort the sorrowful. May this blessed Book be our guide, and make us wise unto salvation. O may we study it with devout attention; and have our hearts so freed from sin, error, and prejudice, as to understand and receive its instructions; be moulded into thy image by the bright examples which it presents for our imitation, and clothed with those robes of right-

eousness which shall enable us to resist all temptation, and press forward in duty, even though our way may be dark and difficult.

Gracious Father, without thy holy Word, we have no sure guide in this dark and sinful world; without its divine spirit, we have nothing to sanctify our affections, and without its hopes, nothing to sustain us in the day of trial and death. May it therefore be our constant companion; may we search it with sincerity and diligence; and may we never be among those who neglect to consult its teachings. O give us a true sense of its worth, and help us to understand all its teachings. May the aged study it, and have its pure light to cheer them on their way to the grave; may the young study it, and be directed in the paths of righteousness; may the prosperous study it, and be saved from that pride and self-sufficiency, by which so many souls have been ruined; may the afflicted study it, and have awakened within them a cheerful confidence. O grant that it may be to all the power of God unto salvation; and thy name shall have all the praise forever. Amen.

THE NATURE OF PRAYER.

REFLECTIONS adapted to Isa. i. 10—31. Matt. vi. 1—13. Matt. vii.

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
  Unuttered or expressed,
The motion of a hidden fire,
  That lies within the breast.

The poet has here given a true definition of Prayer. We find another, equally correct and explicit, in the

Shorter Catechism—"Prayer is an offering up of our desires to God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Jesus Christ."

According to this definition, prayer is the unfeigned language of the heart; and all petitions, addressed to God, which do not spring from the heart, are solemn mockery. We find various allusions, in the Scriptures, to such petitions. "When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood." "Ye hypocrites! well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." "When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men." It is not enough, then, to offer up daily petitions to God, even though they be offered in the solemn manner and tones of sincere prayer. Such petitions are not acceptable to God, and will call down no blessing from his throne. The heart must feel what the lips express, or we do not pray; and if the heart feels, if its pure desires rise to God, even though the lips give no utterance to those desires, God will answer and bless. No doubt prayers often ascend from the hearts of humble worshippers, which are infinitely more acceptable to God, than those uttered in the pompous, studied, and ornamented language of him who officiates at the sacred altar. And no doubt, in many houses, where vocal prayer is unknown, prayers, pure as ever reached the ear of the Father, are daily offered. God has no regard to form, place, or language. It matters not whether we sit, kneel, or stand; if the heart is right, our prayers will be heard. It is immaterial where we pray, whether in the temple, in our chamber, or out beneath the broad heavens; all places are alike to God. It is equally immaterial, whether our desires are "unuttered or expressed;" if we earnestly desire strength to resist evil, and to persevere in the way of duty, God will impart it.

Let us not mistake here. We must acknowledge that many places are favorable to devotion, and that vocal prayer is calculated to affect the heart. While, therefore, we admit that prayer is the soul's sincere desire, we maintain that places consecrated to religion are calculated to awaken devotional feelings; and that giving utterance to our desires, may not only serve to shut the mind against worldly influences, but also to deepen its religious impressions.

Let us then keep our hearts pure, and never mock our Maker, by asking what we do not desire.

PRAYER.

O Lord, we rejoice that while thou sittest on the throne of universal empire, thou dost also fill the throne of grace; and that thou art ever ready to hear the prayers of those who approach thee in humility and reverence.

We are encouraged to lift up our hearts in prayer; for thou art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy. Thine ear is ever open to the petitions of thy children, and thou wilt listen to every prayer which ascends from the sincere worshipper, whether he bow in the thronged temple, around the family altar, or in the secret chamber. Blessed be thy name, that thou art mindful of our wants, and that in the day of trouble we can call upon thee; that when we lack wisdom, thou wilt give liberally, and that when we are weak and sinful, thou art ready to uphold and purify us. Holy Father, give us ever a prayerful heart. May not a day pass without witnessing our devotions. May the sick look to thee and find help; the needy, and have their wants supplied; the erring, and be directed in the way of duty. May the aged commune

often with thee; and as the outer man wastes away, find the inner man continually increasing in strength. And may the young daily ask thy guidance, and earnestly seek for that moral power which will enable them to resist all temptation, and press forward even until death in the path of holiness.

O God, grant that all our devotions may be sincere, and that none of us may draw near to thee with our lips, while our hearts are far from thee. Give us the true spirit of prayer, that our petitions may come up as incense before thee, and that the lifting up of our hands may be as the morning and evening sacrifice.

O God, give to the children, here assembled, a meek and contrite spirit, and incline them to seek communion with thee.

Graciously assist us in the discharge of our varied duties; save us from sin, and finally admit us to thy kingdom above. O God, close not thy ear against our petitions; withhold not the favors which we need; but bless us according to our necessities; and thine, through Jesus Christ, shall be all the praise. Amen.

THE GREATNESS OF THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE.

REFLECTIONS adapted to 2 Cor. iv. 2 Cor. v. Eph. iv.—The Bible sets forth, in the most explicit terms, the greatness of the office sustained by all engaged in preaching the Gospel. It teaches that faithful ministers are ambassadors for Christ, sent to treat with sinners, and to help forward the holiest purposes of infinite grace. It represents them as coming in God's name,

and acting in Christ's stead, doing the very work he did when upon the earth, and what he wills to have done, now that he is in heaven.

This work is the reconciliation of man to God, a work which exceeds, in importance, all others. God is right, the sinner wrong; God is holy, the sinner unholy. Hence the work of reconciliation renders man like his Maker, and brings him into the highest state of usefulness and enjoyment he can attain to on earth; it redeems him from that which is the sum of all evil and wretchedness.

Look abroad upon the world, and what do you behold? Nation is engaged in fierce conflict with nation, destroying human life, laying waste property, desolating cities, and cursing agriculture and commerce, the arts and sciences, liberty and learning, morals and religion, with all the baneful influences of war! Man, enslaved and maddened by his besotted appetites, is preying upon his fellow-man, cheating, defrauding and oppressing; and from the hearts of thousands and thousands are going up the loud wails of woe! Even the learned and the great are warring against the best interests of society, and living in practices which would sever the most endearing relations of life, and bring to naught all that is fair and lovely and worthy of possession. Now, all these evils, so wide-spread and great, so full of poison and misery, are the fruit of unreconciliation to God. I ask, then, if the office of the minister is not the highest to which man can be called? if it does not far transcend that of him who occupies a chair in the first literary institutions of the land, or sits in the proudest seat of worldly authority?

We must estimate the value of every office, by the benefit which it confers; what, then, can equal in importance the office of a Christian ambassador? No other has so intimate a connection with the highest welfare of man—none exerts on him such a holy influence. How cheerfully and zealously, then, should we labor for the encouragement of the good minister.

PRAYER.

O THOU who art the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, help us to realize what great things thou hast done for man. All nature reveals thy glory and grandeur, thy wisdom and goodness. All thy works praise thee, and declare thy greatness and mercy. But, eternal God, in thy word we have a far more glorious manifestation of thy perfections. Thanks to thy name for this rich gift, and that upon us the Sun of righteousness has arisen. By him we have access to our Father and are led in the way of peace. By him we have attained to greater certainty concerning thy will and pleasure, and to surer hopes concerning a life to come. By him hast thou instituted amongst us the pastoral office, and ordained that men should be set apart to the work of the ministry. And, O God, may all who have entered upon this work realize its importance, and always remember that they are co-workers with him who died for the world, ambassadors for God by whom he is beseeching sinners to be reconciled to himself. Correct and subdue in them all inordinate desires and unholy attachments, and grant that their thoughts and lives may be such as become ministers of the everlasting Gospel. May they realize the good which their example will produce if it be irreproachable; the evil if worthless or suspected. Guard them against levity of behavior, sudden and violent transports, prodigality and avarice. Let no deviation from piety be encouraged by their demeanor, and no soul sanction its indiscretions, or excuse its sins, by referring to their unworthiness.

Ever blessed Lord, we pray for thy choicest

favors upon our Teacher and Pastor. Give him all that wisdom which he needs to direct his steps, and discharge aright his responsible duties. May we realize the greatness of the office which he holds, and be untiring in our exertions to aid him in his work. May we open our hearts to the doctrines he is ordained to preach; and by no indifference, neglect or sin of ours, may his heart be discouraged, or his duties be rendered more trying and arduous. May we be punctual in our attendance upon his ministrations, and listen with meekness to his rebukes and exhortations. May we walk with him in love, and be so encouraged and strengthened by his labors, as to keep thy law and live in holiness all our days.

Grant that all who wait upon his ministry may be truly converted from sin. May he guide the young, encourage the desponding, cheer the aged, and comfort the afflicted. May all his people be zealous of good works.

O Lord, let thy blessings be upon him this day. May he preach thy word with power, and be encouraged by the devout attention of his flock. Guide him and us, and all men, in the way of peace, and finally save all, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

REVENGE.

Reflections adapted to Matt. v. Rom. xii. Rom. xiii.—Revenge is one of the worst passions of the human heart. Its whole influence is bad. If we desire proof of this, let us look at the condition of those nations where this is a ruling passion. Turn, for

instance, to the Indians of our country. War is the chief employment of the men; revenge is kindled towards all who have wronged them, or trespassed upon their rights. They fight with terrible madness, and inflict upon their captives the most horrid cruelties.

Turn to Africa, and you will see the same passion manifesting itself in transports of joy over the sufferings of human beings; in drinking human blood as it flows from the mangled bodies of the dying, and in piercing them with red hot irons. In M'Lead's voyage to Africa, it is stated, that on the thatched roofs of the guard-houses which surround the palace of the governor are ranged, on wooden stakes, vast numbers of human skulls; the path leading to the door is paved with the same; and the top of the wall which encloses an area before it, is stuck full of human jaw-bones.

Turn, also, to the islands of the Pacific ocean, where the people are more like demons than men; where they live under the perpetual apprehension of being destroyed by each other; where revengeful passions constantly agitate the soul, and a melancholy gloom hangs over the mind, making its home a region of darkness, in which the "radiations of benevolence" are almost wholly unknown.

Now, when we thus look at the workings of revenge, we ask if it is any wonder that Jesus was so urgent in teaching that it should never have possession of the human heart! Revenge is blind, and makes no distinction between the really guilty and those suspected of crime; it is cruel, and tortures without reason or justice; it is destructive, and aims only at the ruin of those against whom it is kindled. Thus, in its nature, effects, and designs, it is pernicious. Give it, then, no home in your bosoms. Never let it rule your spirits; no master can be more terrible than this. He will drive you on to the commission of acts, for which a long life of virtue cannot atone. "Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool

than of him." Labor, then, for that discretion which deferreth anger!

PRAYER.

God of the morning and the evening, we would lift up our souls to thee in gratitude, and give thanks to thy glorious name, that thy care and goodness have been over us another week, and that health, food and raiment have been continued to us. Above all do we thank thee that we are still favored with the means of grace; that the blessed hopes of the gospel are still ours, and that we have not been left to turn from him who died for our redemption.

O God, enable us to realize the greatness of thy love and the riches of thy grace. Give us just conceptions of thy character, that our hearts may be deeply affected by thy righteousness, which executeth judgment for the oppressed; by thy mercy, which endures from everlasting to everlasting; by thy compassion, which spares the sinful; and by thy power, which upholds all worlds. We rejoice, O Lord, that thou art slow to anger, plenteous in mercy, and ready to forgive the erring. We rejoice that thy throne is established in goodness, and that thou art kind to the unthankful and evil. And we pray that we may be followers of thee, and love our enemies, even as thou didst love a sinful world. O God, may we imitate thee in thy forbearance and forgiveness, and like thee love those whose hearts are inflamed with hatred. May we never be provoked to renevil for evil, and cursing for cursing. Save us, we beseech thee, from a revengeful spirit, and help us to overcome evil with good.

Gracious Father, may we keep the example of our Saviour constantly before us; and be stimulated by his patience, mercy and forbearance, to endure wrong without resentment. We lament that we have ever given way to vindictive feelings, and that we have been led to injure in thought, word or action any who have sought our harm. We lament the general prevalence of a revengeful spirit; that so many disregard the example of him who prayed for his murderers, and sought the salvation of his foes. O wilt thou enable all to see the sinfulness of revenge, and the terrible evil it is calculated to produce. Turn, O Lord, turn all to thee; purify all hearts, and fill all with that love which is the bond of perfectness, and which can patiently endure insult and wrong. May we walk in love, as Christ hath loved us, and given himself a ransom for our sins.

Holy Watchman of thy chosen people, keep us in thy spirit, and lead us in the way of life. Pardon what thou hast seen amiss, accept us through Jesus Christ, and in his name shall be ascribed to thee all honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

FORGIVENESS.

Reflections adapted to Exod. xxxiv. Ps. ciii. Matt. xviii.—When the Saviour commenced his ministry, he found the world sunk in the lowest state of depravity. Inflamed passions were burning and raging in every bosom, and man was arrayed in hostility against man, brother against brother; wrong was returned for wrong, hatred for hatred, and cursing for cursing. The great Redeemer looked upon this wretched condition of the world, and wept. His

bosom was filled with pity, and he sought to breathe his own benign spirit into the hearts over which revenge had so long held its iron sway. His benevolence did not waste itself in prayers and tears; he engaged at once in the work of reform. He commenced by calling the people to repentance, and commanding them to restrain their inflamed passions. His language was —Forgive until seventy times seven—always cherish a forgiving spirit—be ever ready to embrace with affection the man who will acknowledge the wrong he has done, and ask your forgiveness. "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him." There is no limitation to this duty; we must always forgive when a brother, in penitence, asks it.

No virtue is more god-like. Jehovah is spoken of as the "Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and will by no means clear the guilty." "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger forever." He stands ever ready to receive his children. He waits not to have them sue for acceptance, or make any long confession; as soon as penitence has gained possession of the soul, so soon does he own and receive it. He even comes to meet the repentant prodigal, and cheer him on his return to duty. Thanks be to thy name, O Lord, for all this goodness! Shall man, frail, sinful man, be unforgiving, when God is so merciful? Shall he who needs so much mercy refuse it to his fellow-being? Forbid, O Father, that such a sin be laid to our charge.

PRAYER.

Almighty and most merciful Father, we render unto thee our sincere thanks for the manifold

blessings of thy hand. Thou art the Giver of all good; thou delightest in the happiness of thy creatures, and art daily imparting the riches of thy bounty. Through thy mercy we have been enabled to finish the business of another week, and to behold the light of this holy Sabbath. Thou, O God, hast been our Protector; thou hast crowned us with favor; thou hast supplied our table with plenty; thou hast defended our dwelling from harm.

Merciful Lord, we adore thee as the God of all grace; as the Fountain of all goodness, as the ever blessed and glorious Father of the spirits of all flesh. We rejoice that there is forgiveness with thee; that thou art ready to pardon the iniquities of thy people, and to receive to thy extended arms those who have forgotten thy law. For thy rich mercy's sake in Jesus Christ, forgive the sins with which we are chargeable; forgive our neglect of thee; forgive our trespasses against each other. Grant that our transgressions may not bring thy displeasure upon our dwelling, and may we never incur the curse which falls upon the wicked; but may we be kept from evil all the days of our lives.

O God, may we be followers of thee as dear children. May our tempers be mild, compassionate and forgiving. May we, like our Master, be holy, harmless and undefiled. Let our passions, subdued by a reverence for thy authority and presence, be rightly governed in all things. May anger, malice, and hatred have no control over us; and when we feel ourselves to be slanderously reported, falsely accused, or hated without a cause,

may we remember our Saviour, who meekly endured so many reproaches, indignities and cruelties that he might be an example to all men. O Father, give us his gentle, forbearing and forgiving spirit. May this spirit be always in our hearts, restraining us when wronged, and keeping us from evil when tried and tempted. Let not the sun go down upon our wrath; and however pursued and opposed, may we keep our hearts in subjection to thy law, and never suffer them to be brought under the dominion of sin.

Spread abroad among the nations the benign and holy spirit of the Gospel. May peace and good-will prevail throughout the earth; may war, and contention, and strife be done away, and all men live together in love.

O Lord, give us more of thy spirit; make us more kind and gentle; more ready to render good for evil; and finally save us everlastingly, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

CONTENTMENT.

Reflections adapted to Philip. iv. 1 Tim. vi. Heb. xiii.—There is no virtue more important than contentment; without it, there can be no true enjoyment, even though we may be blessed with health, riches and honor. It is, therefore, the duty of all, to study to be content with such things as they have, and learn, in whatsoever circumstances they are, therewith to be content. But to acquire this virtue, we must always keep in mind the righteousness of God's dealings, and feel that everything which he ordains is for a benevolent end. He does nothing in hatred; he is a Father,

and has a father's love. If he afflicts, it is for a good purpose. True,

> God moves in a mysterious way,
> His wonders to perform;
> He plants his footsteps in the sea,
> And rides upon the storm.

But, though thus, at times, surrounded by darkness, justice and judgment are ever the habitation of his throne; and, therefore, we must believe,

> His purposes will ripen fast,
> Unfolding every hour;
> The bud may have a bitter taste,
> But sweet will be the flower.

If we have any doubts in regard to the goodness and equity of God's dealings, they will be removed by considering, why these principles so seldom characterize the government of earthly rulers. First, earthly rulers are limited in wisdom, and may form bad plans. Secondly, they are limited in goodness, and are oftentimes moved by wrong intentions. Thirdly, they are changeable, and can be provoked by opposition to vindictive measures. These are the principal reasons why they do not always rule in equity. But these, being imperfections incident alone to humanity, cannot affect him who is infinite in wisdom, unbounded in goodness, and unchangeable in his nature. Hence, God does all things right, and it should be our great study to bow in submission to his dealings. How is this truth calculated to make us contented with the allotments of Providence.

Again; it will increase our contentment to reflect, that discontent serves only to make our condition worse. If sick, discontent aggravates our disease; if poor, it cannot diminish our poverty. Besides, it is quite enough to be sick and poor, without adding to these evils that of discontent, which is far greater than sickness and poverty combined.

Again; if we would enjoy the blessings of contentment, we must not allow envy to gain possession of the heart, for envy and discontent usually meet in the same person. Neither must we allow avarice to gain the mastery over our affections; for it creates an unreasonable desire for this world's goods, and goads us incessantly on to obtain them. We must guard with the same assiduous care against pride; for it enlargeth itself as the grave, and like that is never disposed to say, "it is enough." He, therefore, that would know the blessings of contentment, must confide in the righteousness and goodness of God's government; learn the duty of submission to unavoidable ills, and keep his heart free from envy, avarice and pride.

PRAYER.

O RIGHTEOUS Lord God, we adore thee as a being infinitely blessed and glorious, and as the holy Governor of heaven and earth. Thou art merciful in thy designs, wise in thy plans, and just in thy dealings. Thou hast exercised a gracious care over us ever since we came into the world. Thou hast supplied all our wants; crowned our days with goodness; and guarded us from danger.

But, O Lord, though we have lived on thy bounty, and been constantly overshadowed by thy mercy, we have often murmured and complained; we have been impatient and discontented, and given way to those feelings which exclude from thy kingdom, and render life dark and wretched. Merciful Father, we have distrusted thy word; and when denied the favors we have sought, have allowed an unhallowed spirit to take possession of our souls. O give us, we beseech thee, those views of thy character and

government, which shall awaken a firm trust in thy faithfulness and mercy, and render us truly submissive to all thy dealings. Root from our hearts all envy, avarice and pride, and enable us to be contented with our lot, whatever may be our situation. O God, in the day of trial, when sickness invades our dwellings, when the thick clouds of adversity hang over our homes; when we are called to suffer privations, and to realize that disappointment is the lot of all, may thy grace be with us, and we have that spirit of resignation which shall enable us to submit without one complaining emotion. Eternal Father, help us so to discipline our hearts, that we may learn, in whatsoever state we are, therewith to be content. May we remember the privations and sufferings of our blessed Master, and be willing to endure whatever thou shalt ordain. May our expectations be moderated by humility, and by a sense of our great unworthiness. And may we realize that, however numerous the privileges we enjoy, however great the splendor in which we live, and however vast our attainments in human knowledge, we can know nothing of true happiness, without contentment. Holy Lord, give us this blessed virtue, that the world may be to us an abode of peace, and that we may have hearts to enjoy the favors by which we are surrounded. O God, forgive our sins; forgive our many complaints against thee; forgive our ingratitude for thy mercies, and our discontent when tried and afflicted. O give us the spirit of our Master, that we may be like him. Be our guardian this day, that we may spend it in thy service. Hear us

and answer us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FRAUD IN TRADE.

REFLECTIONS adapted to Prov. xx. Prov. xxviii. Prov. xi.—No one can read the Scriptures, without being convinced that human nature has been the same in all ages. In the days of the ancients, the same sins prevailed that are now so common; evil-speaking, cruelty, injustice and fraud were practised by the high and low. Hence, Solomon represents a buyer as saying, "It is naught, it is naught;" but boasting of his bargain, when he has gone his way. How much is this like the stratagems with which all are now familiar. Almost every buyer decries the articles which he wishes to purchase; pretends to see this or the other fault; declares that he can buy cheaper elsewhere, and that he has often bought cheaper and better.

I know of only one excuse which can be offered for such a course, and that is the conduct of the seller. He extravagantly commends his goods; represents them as much cheaper than can be purchased at any other place, and declares oftentimes that he is selling below cost.

Now it must be obvious, that such conduct is opposed to true religion; for that was designed, not only to govern us on the Sabbath, but in our walk and dealings. It forbids all deception, and requires that we should be strictly honest.

I know the excuses that are offered for deception in trade. It is said, such are the customs of society, that no man can be successful if he trades upon the principles we recommend. But is this a fact? Shall we say, that the fundamental principles of Christianity are impracticable? and, that it is impossible to succeed honestly in business? None but an infidel would say this; for it is a virtual rejection of Christianity. Ex-

perience shows that those are the most successful who are the most honest. Besides, business conducted honestly, can be done with much more expedition, and at less expense. Nor is this all. When one principle of dishonesty has been admitted in trade, others can be justified; and thus, in allowing only one dishonest practice, a vast gate-way is opened, which will flood the soul with all that is false and deceptive. No business man, who practises any kind of fraud, can have a security against being driven on to the farthest extremes of fraud. Neither can he have reason to confide in the honesty of those in his employ; for if he teaches them to deal fraudulently with others, can he hope that they will not defraud him? The losses experienced in this way far overbalance all that fraud can gain, to say nothing of those violations which expose to the punishment of the law, and which involve the trader and those in his employ in degradation and shame.

Is it not, then, better to deal honestly with all men? Are not the principles of the Gospel more valuable than fraud and deception recommend? If we answer in the negative, we say the wisdom of the world is better than the wisdom of God; that dishonesty is better than honesty!

PRAYER.

O Thou, to whom the secrets of all hearts are known, and who canst not look upon sin with the least degree of allowance, we would humble ourselves at the footstool of thy throne, and pray for thy blessing upon us and all men. We devoutly thank thee, that we are favored with another opportunity of surrounding this altar, in health and peace. While many have been called hence, we have been preserved; and while others have been tossed to and fro, we have been refreshed with sleep, and guarded from danger. Day unto day, and night unto night certifies that thou art good,

and never failest those who put their trust in thee.

But, indulgent Lord, we acknowledge that we have not made that return for thy care and love, which we ought to have done. We have been ungrateful, and strayed far away from thee; we have followed the devices of our own hearts; we have done many things which were sinful in thy sight, and which merit thy severe judgments. We lament, O God, our wide departures from duty; we lament also the general prevalence of sin among the children of men. Though thy laws are holy, yet they are despised; though in the keeping of them there is great reward, yet are they transgressed. Our sins, O God, are manifold, and rise before thee like a dismal cloud. Selfishness and avarice, pride and envy, malice and hatred, reign in many hearts. O Father, enable all to see the evil which every kind of fraud is calculated to produce, and may justice take the place of injustice, honesty of dishonesty, truth of falsehood, and all men walk uprightly. May he that has deceived, deceive no more; and all who have lived in darkness, put off the old man with his deeds, and walk in newness of life. May there be an end of wrong, and strife and litigation. Gracious Father, may all realize that the world is one great family, bound together by a common interest, a common brotherhood, and a common destiny. Write thy law of love upon all hearts; purify all; mould all into thy image, and make all kind, courteous, pitiful and tender-hearted.

Preserve *us*, O God, from deceit and fraud; make us honest in all our transactions, and may we never follow the multitude to do evil.

Keep the children of this family from treachery and wrong; govern them by thy law, and may they never be suffered to follow the unholy customs of a corrupt world.

Omniscient God, enable us to realize that all things are known to thee, and that thou wilt reward every man according to his deeds. Wash us in the blood of the Lamb, and own us, at last, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE ADVANTAGES OF PREACHING.

Reflections adapted to 1 Cor. i. Rom. x. Philip. i. —In estimating the advantages of preaching, it is necessary to consider that the pulpit is consecrated to the proclamation of God's word. It is the guardian of his honor and glory, and exhibits his wisdom, love and power. It declares the conquests of truth and grace, and points the sinner to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Now, who can listen to such instructions, and not find himself enlightened, elevated and improved? Who can listen to them and not be fortified against the strong attacks of error —the arts, intrigues and sophistries of infidel philosophers, and have his soul stored with those sentiments which lift it above everything low and degrading?

While sitting under a true ministry, and listening to a description of the boundless mercy, the everlasting love, the unchanging justice, and the almighty power of God; to the dying compassion, the impartial grace, and the triumphant resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; to the exhaustless provisions, the robes, palms, crowns and songs of heaven; we forget the earth, with its sordid interests, its vain amusements, its idle disputes, and its fierce conflicts; and we live with God, are inspired with his love, and ready to join in the loud song of thanksgiving. We are changed into his image,

and filled with his fulness. We are made new creatures, and feel the littleness of things earthly, and the greatness of things divine.

Again; it is the office of the pulpit to instruct man in his duty, and rouse him to a sense of his obligations. To see the importance of this, we have only to consider how liable all are to become unmindful of duty, and cherish feelings that estrange from God. Evils steal upon the soul through a thousand avenues; and while we may be fancying ourselves free from their corrupting power, they may be exerting upon us a most baneful effect. Such being the case, it is necessary that we should often have our hearts dissected and laid open before us; our characters so held up that we may see them as they are; our sins numbered, and recorded for our serious reflection; our consciences aroused, that they may quicken us in the discharge of our duty. A faithful pulpit can do all this, and make us try ourselves by those tests of character, furnished by him, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. How great, then, is the amount of good which it can do.

Let every faithful minister, then, have the hearty co-operation of all who love truth and virtue.

PRAYER.

O Lord God Almighty, the Fountain of light and the Source of good, we come before thee in the name of Jesus Christ, and humbly beseech thee to have mercy upon us. Thou art the only living and true God; thy love is impartial, and thy mercy everlasting. Assist us, indulgent Father, in our devotions, and make us duly thankful that we are still living upon the earth, and still enjoying the means of grace.

We render thanks to thy name for all our religious privileges; that we live under the light of thy glorious Gospel, and are not left to grope our way in the darkness of those sitting in the region

of the shadow of death. In great mercy hast thou given us an existence in this land of Christian institutions. We bless thee for the Bible; for the Sabbath; for the ministry of reconciliation; and we praise thy name that we are favored with the opportunity of hearing the Gospel. O Lord, may we duly appreciate the privileges we enjoy, and never listen to thy word in vain. May we never be among those who despise the ministry thou hast given to the world; but may we render thee constant praise for what it has done to enlighten the ignorant, reclaim the sinful, guide the wandering, and comfort the afflicted. O God, we bless thee that the Gospel has ever sounded in our ears; that we have heard its joyful tidings; that we have imbibed its peaceful spirit, and felt its elevating power.

O wilt thou be with all who preach thy holy word, and crown their labors with abundant success. Give them health and strength, that they may devote themselves constantly to their work. Above all, we pray, that they may be so replenished with thy Spirit, and so exemplary in their walk and conversation, that they may be the means of turning many from sin, and promoting the knowledge and practice of religion.

Smile, Lord, upon our Pastor. May he continue a fearless defender of the truth, and a faithful watchman upon the walls of Zion. May he declare thy whole counsel; rightly divide thy word, and give to each a portion in due season. May he warn the careless, help the weak, and comfort the sorrowful. May he reprove, rebuke and exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. Give to his people a listening ear, and an under-

standing heart; may they all receive with cheerfulness his instructions, and be faithful co-workers with him in those efforts calculated to advance thy cause.

May we, O God, be faithful to him in all things, and prove our friendship by our reverence for his sacred office, our regard for his feelings, and our exertions to sustain the institutions of religion. Be with us this day, and may thy sanctuary be to our souls the gate of heaven. We ask these favors, and offer our thanks, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE NECESSITY OF OBEDIENCE TO GOD.

Reflections adapted to Ps. cxix. 1—16. Prov. i. Matt. v. 1—20.—Why does God require our obedience? Why is he so earnest in his call upon us to obey him, and walk according to his directions? These are important questions. We know that he derives no benefit from any service we can render. He is infinite, and is wholly unaffected by what we say or do. If, then, it is not for his good, why does he demand our obedience? Has he an arbitrary will to gratify? This cannot be, for he is a God of mercy and love, and can take no delight in what is useless or burdensome to man. His will is our happiness. It is evident, therefore, that he is thus urgent to secure our obedience for no other reason than because it is essential to our welfare. Obedience and happiness are inseparably conjoined.

In order to be satisfied of this, we have only to look at the Divine law.

1. It demands that we should be temperate in all things. Disregarding this demand has been the most fruitful source of sickness and suffering known to the world. No person can give himself up to improper

indulgences, without having his excess visited with great bodily, if not mental and moral evils. The law, then, is absolutely essential to health and happiness.

2. The law is equally essential in the government of the heart. When the Divine requisitions are regarded, all our desires are duly regulated, and all our affections centred in objects that are holy and good. But when the law is trampled in the dust, hatred, revenge and envy prey upon the heart, and render it the abode of wo. It is impossible, therefore, to have peace without obedience; he that keeps not his heart lives in misery.

Solomon has various figures to illustrate the effects of obedience and disobedience. Hear his language: "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins. He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray." "My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold: and my revenue than choice silver. I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures." According to these representations, a man could no more look for health, while breathing the air of infection and death, than expect happiness while engaged in the service of sin. On the other hand, virtue is as much the life and happiness of the soul, as food is the life and strength of the body; and he is just as wise who attempts to live without nourishment, as he who seeks for happiness without obedience.

PRAYER.

Unto thee, O God, would we come, and to thee lift up our petitions. Thy mercy endureth forever. Every day makes known thy goodness. Thou hast conducted us through the occupations of another week, and permitted us, in the peaceful shelter of this dwelling, on this holy morning,

to look back upon thy providence which hath guided and protected us. O Lord, make this house the home of kindness and love, and enable us to live together in peace.

We bless thee for that religion which sanctifies the affections, and makes the earthly dwellings of thy people abodes of joy. Thanks to thy name that we have an existence in a Christian land, and that we are surrounded by the blessed institutions of the Gospel. And, O God, most fervently do we pray that thy word may ever direct our steps. Forbid that we should look upon thee as an unjust Lord, demanding service which is unreasonable; or hope for happiness while walking in the path of disobedience. Help us to realize that thou art our infinite Friend, and requirest no duty not designed for our good. Open our eyes to behold thy love, in the obedience thou dost demand, and in all thy prohibitory laws. Keep us from falling a prey to error, from listening to the deceptions of sin, and from running into any excess. May we deny all ungodliness, live soberly and righteously, and keep ourselves from the evil that is in the world. May we give our hearts to thee, and never refuse obedience to thy righteous laws. In the day of trial, when enemies assail us, may we be obedient; when true religion is despised and subjects its followers to persecution and reproach, may we be obedient; when wealth and honor and pleasure would tempt our hearts, O then, may we be obedient. O, indulgent Lord, may we always obey thee, and walk in thy commandments blameless.

We lament that we have so often disregarded thy law and served so much our selfish passions.

With shame do we acknowledge that our hearts have been too much given to the world, and that our hands have been too busy in doing our own will. Though we have daily shared thy bounty, and thy sun hath constantly shone upon our path, we have served the creature more than the Creator. Fill us, O God, fill us with thy Spirit, and qualify us to perform our whole duty. Crush every impure desire, and lead us in the way everlasting. We are thine, O Lord, save us, and give us strength to do thy whole will.

Smile upon our friends; guard them against sin; direct them in the path of safety and peace; spread their table with plenty, and fill their cup with blessings. Above all, make them willingly obedient. Father, let thy blessing attend us during the week upon which we have entered, and finally save us and all men, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

ON HEARING THE WORD.

Reflections adapted to James i. John iii. 1 Cor. ii.—It is a matter of great surprise with serious Christians, that so many can attend, from Sabbath to Sabbath, on the services of the sanctuary, and not be more benefitted than they are by the Gospel. We cannot attribute this to the unfaithfulness of ministers; for it is believed that they generally reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. Neither can we attribute it to any defect in the Gospel; for that is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. The difficulty lies principally with the hearers. Some of them are inattentive. Instead of listening to the message delivered, they are forming plans

for the prosecution of their temporal affairs, living over scenes of amusement, or wandering in the regions of fancy. Such know nothing of the topics discussed or the duties urged; and though they are punctual in their attendance from Sabbath to Sabbath, they remain ignorant under the instructions of the best and most faithful teachers!

Others are inconsiderate hearers. They may listen with becoming attention to the preacher; and, yet, never obtain any distinct views of the doctrines preached. The reason is, they do not consider what they hear; they never reflect; they devote no time to investigation; and, therefore, are not benefitted.

Others fail to receive benefit from preaching, because they are critical hearers. They go to church, not to learn the great doctrines of redemption, or imbibe the spirit of Christ, or have their virtuous resolutions strengthened; but to be amused, to witness a display of talent or oratory, to obtain material for conversation, and to criticise the performances. Such hearers will complain of the gesticulation, the style of the composition, or the nature of the doctrines enforced. Thus they go on criticising, till the minister's influence is destroyed, and the word made ineffectual.

Others fail to derive benefit from preaching, because they are prejudiced against the minister. Perhaps his gesticulation is awkward; his style too plain or too ornamental; his discourses too doctrinal or too practical, too long or too short; his delivery too rapid or too slow. While any of these prejudices have possession of the soul, it is impossible to receive any great benefit from preaching: everything the minister says or does will be wrong. No matter how skilfully he may manage the word of God, how faithfully he may delineate the Christian character, or how truly he may describe the majesty and mercy of God, the tenderness and purity of Christ; all he may say is useless to those who listen with the ear of prejudice. He may make the sun shine with a more brilliant lustre, the streams murmur with a softer melody, and enrobe creation in

new beauty and splendor; but to the prejudiced, he is dull, uninteresting and tiresome.

Thus we have before us some of the reasons why preaching does no more good. Let all hearers, therefore, examine themselves, and seek to hear in such a manner as to be made wiser and better. They should listen to the command of him who said, *Take heed how ye hear.*

PRAYER.

We adore thee, O Lord, as the Source of all wisdom and goodness; as our Father, Friend, and Saviour; as that being worthy the praises of all hearts. We thank thee for that mercy which has brought us to behold the light of another Sabbath, and poured around us its cheerful beams. Give us thy Spirit to keep our devotion from growing cold and lifeless, and enable us to advance steadily and silently in knowledge and grace, like the dawning of the morning light.

We bless thee for the Gospel of thy Son; for the cheering views it gives of thy providence; for the winning and corrective influence it exerts over our souls; for the safe and pleasant paths into which it leads; for the sacred ties in which it binds heart to heart, and for the sure hope which it inspires of another and a better life. O Lord, we acknowledge that if without this Gospel, we should be in darkness; ignorant of thy purposes of mercy, and the conclusion to which thy government is tending; ignorant of our duty, and the way of life and peace, and ignorant of that glorious world which thou hast prepared for all men.

Ever gracious Lord! we bless thy name for all that the Gospel has done for the perfection of our minds; for the purification it has wrought in our

hearts; for the rank to which it has elevated us; for the holy virtues with which it has clothed us. We bless thee for all it has done for the world; for the agency it has exerted in removing evil, in ameliorating the condition of the poor and oppressed, and fitting the nations for freedom and independence. O Lord, continue thy blessing upon the Gospel. Watch over it with thy peculiar care; arm it with thy power; extend its reign from sea to sea, and may it be the guide and support of all nations; cause its light to illumine every mind; give it entire sway over the whole world.

To this end, bless thy ministering servants; rule their hearts; strengthen their hands; and give success to their labors. Endue them with wisdom from above; inspire them with a holy, heavenly zeal; and grant that they may be faithful in proclaiming their message of life and peace.

Smile, O God, upon those who hear thy word dispensed. May they listen with attention and candor, and be free from those prejudices and worldly influences, which render the Gospel a savor of death unto death. Help all to feel the importance of the Gospel; and the necessity of listening to its instructions, that they may be converted from sin, and made children of God.

O Lord, may we never be among those, who have eyes to see, but see not; ears to hear, but hear not; hearts to understand, but understand not. May we never be careless, inattentive, prejudiced, or critical hearers; but may we so hear as to be made wiser and better.

Watch over us this day; keep us in thy fear;

pardon our sins, and save us, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

TRUST IN GOD.

Reflections adapted to Psalm xxv. Psalm xxxiv. Isaiah xxvi.—"It is better," says David, "to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in man: it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes." But why better? What renders Jehovah so worthy of confidence? Let David answer: "The Lord is my strength. The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly." "Blessed be the Lord, my strength, my goodness and my fortress; my high tower and deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust."

According to these representations, God must have infinite wisdom and power; and be the Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth. Without wisdom he would be liable to err, and without power unable to execute his designs. Hence it is said, His understanding is infinite, and his power almighty. These two attributes constitute the strength of Jehovah, and render him a Rock, a Fortress, a high Tower,—the security and defence of the world. In these consist his superiority over all other gods. Through these he is able to "do whatever seemeth unto him good."

But wisdom and power are not alone sufficient to render God worthy of trust; for, unless he is good, they may be employed in working out the ruin of his people. The Psalmist often gives the goodness of God as a reason for trusting in him. His language is, "Happy *is* he, whose trust is in the Lord, which keepeth truth forever; which executeth judgment for the oppressed; which giveth food to the hungry; which looseth the prisoners; which openeth the eyes of the blind; which raiseth up them that are bowed down; which relieveth the fatherless and the widow." "The

Lord is gracious and full of compassion; slow to anger and of great mercy." "The Lord is good unto all, and his tender mercies are over all his works."

The goodness of Jehovah is one of his most endearing attributes; it is this that causes him to seek, perpetually, the promotion of human happiness, and peculiarly recommends all his plans to our admiration. How, then, can we distrust God! What if he hides his face in judgment? He is still our Father. What if he visits us with affliction? He does not afflict willingly. In all his dealings, he is actuated by infinite goodness, and guided by infinite wisdom.

PRAYER.

Almighty and ever-living God! in whose hand are our times, and whose are all our ways; we humbly acknowledge our entire dependence upon thee. We are weak, but thou art mighty; we are sinful, but thou art holy; we are mortal, but thou art immortal. All thy works praise thee, and declare the infinity of thy wisdom, power and goodness. But, O Lord, though raised far above our highest conceptions; though clothed with majesty, and encircled with ineffable glories, we can draw near to thy mercy-seat, and hold communion with thee. Unchanging and impartial love is revealed in all thy ways; and thy voice of mercy is constantly speaking to our hearts. To that voice, O Father, may we ever listen. And, when visited with sorrow, when our home is made desolate by the wastes of disease and time, may we not give way to feelings of despair; but may we have strength to bear all the afflictions thou shalt send, and be enabled to say, "Thy will, O God, be done."

Gracious Lord! in thee may our trust be

placed. Thou art from everlasting to everlasting; thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds; thy tender mercies extend to all men; thy compassions are infinite; thy greatness is incomprehensible. O, ever blessed Father! when troubles pour upon us, when the enjoyments by which our earthly state is blessed, shall be taken away; when the friends in whom we rejoice shall fail from our sight, may we be sustained by a firm trust in thee. Forbid that we should confide in an arm of flesh; that we should have no higher or firmer hope than earth can give. Forbid that affliction should weaken our confidence in thee, as a wise, holy and merciful Governor; and may we remember that thou dost not afflict willingly, nor grieve thy children; but that love ordains every trial, and forms every cloud which overshadows our path. In all seasons of distress may we fly to thee for refuge. And, O God, may we ever find the gates of mercy unfolded, and the fountains of life pouring forth their streams of comfort. Suffer us not to feel, in the day of trial, that we are forsaken of thee; but may thy presence, then, cheer and encourage us.

Immortal Father! may we realize the shortness of life; that our steps are few and faltering; and that, though the creatures of yesterday, we may depart to-morrow. O wilt thou prepare us for all life's dangers; and enable us, by devout meditation and a firm trust in thee, to meet with composure whatever thy wisdom and goodness may appoint.

Smile, O Lord, upon our relatives and friends, and may their trust ever be in thee. Smile

upon all who are in affliction, and cheer them by thy precious promises. Watch over us during this day; guide us and support us through life, and finally save us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DUTIES OF CHILDREN.

REFLECTIONS adapted to Ps. cxix. 1—16. Prov. xiv. Col. iii.—"Honor thy father and mother," is one of the most important commands God has given. It implies that children should ever treat their parents with the highest respect; obey cheerfully their laws; assiduously consult their wishes, and do what they can for their support if reduced to want.

This command is reasonable and just. Parents provide for the temporal wants of their children; and bestow unnumbered blessings upon them before their infant minds can know whence they come. Parents have wisdom, judgment and experience, and know what is best for their children. How proper, therefore, that they should be obedient in all things.

The world is full of examples exhibiting the terrible effects of filial disobedience. How many, in consequence of this, have plunged into the worst of excesses, and brought upon themselves the most terrible evils which it is possible for human beings to endure. Look at the Prodigal Son. He was impatient under the wholesome restraints of home; he was headstrong, and wished to have his own way, and he left his father's house. No sooner did he commence following the dictates of his passions and judgment, than he began to mingle in vicious company; to follow the practices of the most abandoned, and to spend his money in riot and dissipation. His career was disgraceful and ruinous; and, in a short time, we behold him reduced to a state of the most extreme want and wretchedness. It has

been the same with thousands and thousands. Truly did Moses say, "Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or mother."

Filial obedience was held in the highest estimation by the Athenians. Hence their law says, "He that is undutiful to parents shall be incapable of holding any office" The Romans entertained a similar opinion; for they ordained that a son, who would not, if able, relieve the wants of an aged father, should be his father's slave for life.

PRAYER.

Our Father, who art in heaven! thou art our God, and we will praise thee; our father's God, and we will exalt thy name. In the hours of sleep, when we could not defend ourselves, thou hast been our security. By night and by day, hast thou been our guardian, hope and salvation. Rich and varied have been the expressions of thy goodness; constant and untiring has been thy care. O Lord, while we muse upon thy mercies, kindle within us the sacred flame of devotion, and let our thoughts, rising to heaven, bring back an influence which shall purify our hearts from all sin.

Thou hast, indulgent Father, conferred upon us many exalted blessings. We give thanks to thy name for all we have received from thee; and especially for the care we have been enabled to exercise over our children; for the provision we have been permitted to make for their wants; and for all we have done to secure their honor, esteem, and love.

Eternal Lord, help our children to realize their obligations to thee, and to their earthly parents. O impress thy laws upon their hearts, and under

its blessed influence may they rightly perform all their duties. Help them to realize that thy laws are everlastingly fit and proper, and founded on that which is right and reasonable. May they see that parental authority was derived from thee, and be convinced of the folly of resisting that authority. From inclination and a sense of duty, may they hearken to the instruction of their father, and forsake not the law of their mother. Dispose them to pay a diligent regard to the counsels of wisdom and experience, and find the reward of obedience in the approvings of conscience, and in an extended and useful life. As they grow in years, may they grow more willing and solicitous to honor their parents, live in thy fear, and be guarded from every evil way. Forbid that they should be lifted up with pride and self-conceit, or vainly imagine that the counsels of youth are better than those of age; and that greater peace and security can be enjoyed by despising the authority under which they are placed. Should poverty come upon us, may they relieve our wants; should infirmities enfeeble our powers, may they be our support. May they be ever anxious for our welfare, attentive to our desires, and untiring in their exertions to make life happy.

O Lord, thou art alike the God of the aged and the young; thy instructions are suited to all classes and conditions; thou art the Guide of the inexperienced, the Counsellor of the ignorant, the Comfort of the aged, and the Hope of the sick. Be with us, O Lord, and grant us thy blessing. We have sinned against thee, and done that which was offensive in thy sight. Forgive us, gracious

Father; cleanse our hearts from evil, and enable us ever to walk in love. We ask these favors in the name of Jesus Christ, through whom, unto thee, shall be given all the praise forever and ever. Amen.

DUTIES OF PARENTS.

REFLECTIONS adapted to Prov. xxii. Eph. vi. Deut. vi.—There is no relation in life, imposing such responsibilities, as that which parents sustain to their children. By this relation, they are bound to protect, feed and clothe them, and to train them up in the ways of knowledge and virtue. The children are helpless, and unable to provide for themselves; they are ignorant, and know not what is for their interest. God has, therefore, ordained that parents shall be their guardians and guides; defend them against all evil, and give them all the advantages for mental and moral improvement which circumstances will permit. Hence it is said, "He that provideth not for his own, has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." On the faithful performance of these duties depend, in a great degree, the virtue and peace of children. If neglected, and allowed to grow up without intellectual and moral culture, but faint hopes can be entertained of their usefulness and happiness. How great, then, is the responsibility of parents. It is for them to say, whether their children shall lead idle, sinful and wretched lives, or whether they shall be honored, useful and happy. Let them provide faithfully for all their wants; oppose all their inclinations to vice and irreligion; set before them a good example; hold the reins of parental authority

with a steady hand; never speak or punish in anger; never perform an act or utter a word which it would be improper for them to imitate. Let no parents suppose it is enough to teach by precept; they must teach by example also, or they will be the worst enemies of their children.

PRAYER.

O THOU, who art the Former of our bodies and the Father of our spirits, we would render praise to thy name for our creation, and for the endearing relations we sustain to each other. We rejoice that we are social beings, and are permitted to participate in the varied pleasures of life. Especially do we rejoice in the ties of kindred; that the sweets of home are ours, and that thou hast surrounded us with children, to whom our hearts are so fondly endeared. O Lord, enable us to realize that their usefulness and happiness depend chiefly upon the manner in which we discharge our duty, in supplying their wants and moulding their characters. Give us abiding convictions of the value of good instructions, and the necessity of early religious impressions. Enlighten and direct us in the choice of proper means for cultivating pious and virtuous principles in their tender minds. Help us carefully to watch their tempers, and earnestly to oppose their earliest inclinations to sin. Give us grace to exercise over them a wholesome authority, and by proper discipline to correct their faults and improve their minds. Above all, may our examples be pure, and such as may be safely imitated. May we never give way to feelings of impatience, or punish them with undue severity. Save us, O

Lord, from churlishness and inhumanity; from weakness and improper indulgences; from partiality, and every error and sin which can exert over them an unholy influence.

Gracious God! may we never be doomed to see our children the slaves of sin. O protect them from the snares of the world; suffer them not to throw off restraint, but keep them in thy fear, and enable them to spend their days in thy service. We ask not that they may be rich, and elevated to the high seats of worldly honor; but we ask that they may be governed by thy laws, directed in the paths of wisdom, and honor thee in all their ways.

Ever-living God! spare their lives and bless them with health. May we be so favored of thee as to enjoy their society, and share their kind attentions, when age has enfeebled our powers, or sickness laid us upon the bed of languishing. Give them prosperity in every laudable undertaking; defend them against the disasters of the world, and render their journey on earth easy and happy.

Be with and bless the absent. Protect them [him—her] from all danger, and let thy mercy be over them [him—her.] Let not sickness or calamity be their [his—her] portion; but through thy goodness may it be peace, prosperity and a long life.

Hear us, O Lord, and give us answers of peace, and thine, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, shall be all the praise. Amen.

THE SABBATH.

REFLECTIONS adapted to Exod. xvi. 22—36. Exod. xx. Luke vi. 1—11.—The Lord has set apart one day in seven to be devoted to rest, pious meditation and public worship. In order to be convinced of the wisdom of this arrangement, let us consider,—

1. The tyranny and avarice of the rich. They doom those in their employ to constant toil, and often drive them far beyond the endurance of human strength. Hard, indeed, is the lot of those in any way dependent on men thus cruel. And yet, how large a proportion of our race are thus dependent. What a merciful provision to such is the Sabbath! On this blessed day they can rest from their toil, and give their wasted powers time to regain their strength. Besides, all who rest one day in seven, can perform more labor in a year than those who take no time for rest. This is the opinion of the most distinguished physicians of the world.

2. When immersed in the cares and perplexities of life, it is impossible to fix the mind upon the sublime truths which God has revealed for our guidance and happiness. In order to gain a knowledge of those truths, and have our hearts brought under their influence, we must retire occasionally from the world, and give ourselves to reading and pious meditation. How essential, then, is the Sabbath. Were it abolished, we could have no hope for religion. All men would be wholly controlled by things temporal.

3. Public worship is the most efficient means ever appointed to enlighten the mind, impress truth upon the heart, and render mankind holy. Not only are the worshippers benefitted by the singing, praying and preaching, but also by the sympathy which assembling together awakens; by the manners and examples of each other, and by forgetting, for a season, the follies, amusements, cares and perplexities of life.

How important, then, is the Sabbath! Surely, a day so valuable should never be profaned; all should keep it holy. Instead of being devoted to labor, travelling, visiting, or amusement, it should be devoted to rest, pious meditation, and public worship.

PRAYER.

Almighty Maker of heaven and earth, who art glorious in holiness and infinite in love, we would lift our souls in gratitude to thee, for the rich manifestations of thy mercy, and for thy unwearying care and kindness. Each returning day brings fresh supplies of thy goodness, and lays us under renewed obligations to love and serve thee. Wonderful art thou, O God, in thy adorable perfections. The heavens and the earth are full of the majesty of thy glory.

We thank thee, heavenly Father, for the means of grace, and especially for thy mercy in Christ Jesus. Honor to thy name, that when we were vile and sinful, thou didst send him to die for our redemption. We bless thee for all his labors and sufferings, and for all the institutions which he gave to the world. We rejoice that he was Lord of the Sabbath; and that he consecrated it to prayer, praise and religious improvement. May we remember that on this day he rose from the dead, and gave immortal hope to a dying world. O God, mercifully grant that none may profane a day so holy, and which awakens associations so sacred. Forbid that the cares and sinful pleasures of the world should engross the attention of any on this day; and grant that all may keep it according to thy gracious purpose in its appointment. May the Spirit be with all who unite in

thy worship. Sanctify their affections, and help them to withdraw their thoughts from worldly cares, to have their conversation in heaven, and to worship thee in spirit and in truth. May the power of godliness possess their hearts. Make them sensible, O Lord, how great are the privileges of thy sanctuary; and how blessed it is to enter thy gates with thanksgiving and thy courts with praise. Wilt thou accompany thy word with power, and adapt it to the wants of all who hear it. May the wicked be awakened to righteousness, and flee from the curse of sin. Alarm the careless, help the weak, and reclaim the wandering.

Righteous Lord, be with us this day, and enable us to keep it holy. Make us thankful that we have been favored again with its weekly return; and, when we repair to thy temple, may it be to gain new strength, and to hold communion with thee. May we not be of those who are ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth; but may we receive with meekness and joy the ingrafted word, which is able to save the soul.

Great God! hear us in behalf of these children. O may they love the Sabbath; love thy courts; love thy law.

Assist us and all men with thy heavenly grace; direct all hearts to the attainment of life; and in all the pains and dangers to which we are subjected, may we have thy most gracious care, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

SECOND PART.

PRAYERS SUITABLE FOR THE MORNING OR EVENING DEVOTIONS OF A FAMILY.

THE SCRIPTURES A LIGHT.

FATHER of lights, with whom there is no variableness, and in whom there is no darkness at all, to thee we come as the Source of wisdom and truth, the Fountain of goodness and love, in humble and fervent prayer for thy blessing and direction. O Lord, thou hast graciously encouraged us to seek thy face in prayer. Thou hast called upon us to put our trust in thee, and to ask of thee the preserving and guiding influences of thy Holy Spirit, of which always we have so great need.

Merciful Father, we desire to bring to thee our offering of thanks, that thou hast not left us without a witness of thy truth and loving-kindness. Thou hast given unto us the written word of thy truth as a lamp unto our feet, and a light to our path. And devoutly do we thank thee, most Holy One, that therein thy will and our duty are so clearly and fully revealed, and the way pointed out which leadeth into the green pastures and by the still waters of the divine life of faith and obedience.

We pray, Father in heaven, that thou wilt enable us diligently to study thy holy Word, that we may become daily more and more acquainted with its requirements and counsels for the life that now is, and with its solemn and beautiful revelations of the life that is to come. O Lord, may our souls be filled with the glorious light of thy truth, and our hearts be quickened by it into newness of life and new obedience. Help us to accept the teachings of thy word in all things, that we may be able to put away every wrong thought and act, and follow after all righteousness, and so continually grow in the knowledge and grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And in the hour of temptation and peril, when the heart is weak, and the soul is darkened with the shadows of sin, O Father, then may the word of thy truth pour in its blessed radiance, till the darkness and the shadows shall pass from the soul, till all passion and wrong shall be banished, and light and holiness alone dwell in the inner sanctuary. So may we be preserved in the evil hour, and, though we walk in the night time, a light as of the sun of righteousness be upon our pathway continually.

And in the day of adversity and trial, wilt thou, Father of lights, be with us, and cause thy face graciously to shine upon us. When the spirit is oppressed, and clouds and darkness are around it—when the burthen of sorrow and suffering is upon the heart, and every pulse is with pain—O thou merciful and compassionate Parent, grant unto us then the consolations of thy love, and the comforting influences of thy word. May its calm and holy light be shed abroad in the soul,

till it shall be glad, even as the night-clad earth when the morning light is breaking.

And, at last, when the day of life is drawing to its close, and the shadows of death are gathering about us, O may the teachings of thy word be present with us, and the revelations of immortal life dwell with us as angels of light, till the glorious beauty of the spirit-world shall be opened to the soul, and we shall enter into thy holy presence, and in the light of thy countenance rejoice for evermore. Amen.

INVITATIONS OF THE GOSPEL.

O THOU, unto whom all flesh shall come, and in whose presence is the soul's highest good, we thank thee that thou hast so appointed thy works and thy providence, that they all teach us of thee and of thy goodness, and are full of influences to awaken our confidence in thee, and to draw us in nearness of love and trust and obedience unto thee. And we thank thee that in that still brighter and more glorious manifestation of thyself which thou hast given in the gospel of thy Son, we find the same lessons more fully taught, and the same influences more richly abounding—that there, as everywhere, we see the impress of thy love and manifestations of thy mercy, and that, as nowhere else, we can behold thee revealed as our Father, speaking to us as unto children, beckoning and inviting us to thee, holding out thine arms unto us, and pleading with us through thy Son,—Be ye reconciled to God. We thank thee for all those invitations of mercy, which, as sinners and wan-

derers from our home and our Father's house, we find there addressed to us—for that voice of tenderness with which Jesus speaks to us, saying, Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,—and if any man thirst, let him come to me and drink; and for all those tender expostulations with which thou hast caused us there to be admonished, and by which thou seekest to bring us unto thee. O may our hearts be touched in view of the interest thou hast in all these things manifested in us and our welfare, and may it be given us to realize from what and to what we are thus invited and called, —how, by the voice of thy Son, thou dost invite us away from passion and sin, from disobedience and misery, from wandering amidst the unsatisfactory and fleeting things of this world, to purity and peace, to forgiveness and rest, to the highest and truest development and gratification of that spiritual nature, which thou hast bestowed upon us, to a near communion with thee and an intimate enjoyment of thy presence, to that holiness which is heaven. And O, realizing these things, may it be ours to heed and obey the invitations thus given to us. Give power to every influence which breathes around us to soften our hearts, and to reconcile us in love and obedience to thee. Let thy truth and grace be mighty to convert and sanctify us, and to form us, in obedience to his calls, in the image of Christ. Let thy kingdom come, and thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven, till, at last, thy people shall be conformed to thy law, and beatified in thine immediate presence, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

PROMISES OF THE GOSPEL.

Thou great and everywhere present God, our Father and our Friend, we recognise thee as the Source of all our blessings, and feel that thou art ever good and gracious. For every token of thy love, and for every manifestation of thine interest in us, we thank thee. Above all, would we be ever grateful for what thou hast bestowed upon us through thy Son in the gospel;—for all that is presented there to instruct, to comfort and strengthen, to redeem and sanctify thy children. We would at this time especially remember with devout and grateful feelings, those rich and abundant promises which thou hast there given—the promise of thy Spirit to guide, of thy love to comfort, of thy truth to teach, of thy care to protect, and of thy grace to save us. We bless thee that through thy promise we can feel that, as one who careth for us, thou art ever near us, and wilt never leave nor forsake us; numbering the very hairs of our heads, and suffering no evil thing to come upon us. We thank thee for the promise, that unto those who love and serve thee aright, seeking to dwell near unto thee by faith in Jesus Christ, shall be given that kingdom which consisteth not in meat and drink, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. And, O God, as we feel ourselves in a world of sin and pain, as we realize the disobedience and iniquity of men, and how they wander from thee and from the delights of thy presence, and how the joys of earth are all fleeting, and misfortune, and sorrow, and death ever hover around our path, we bless and glorify thee that thou, Almighty and all-wise,

hast promised a time when Christ shall have drawn all men unto himself—when there shall be no more sin, or pain, or tears, or death, and thou shalt be all in all. O, for these exceeding great and precious promises, we thank thee. Teach us more and more to realize their greatness and excellence, and to feel thy love as manifested in them. And O may we, having these promises, cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of thee; and in the midst of life's discouragements, and mysteries, and trials; in the midst of sin, and pain, and adversity, through life always, and in death, may the fulness of their blessed influences be shed abroad within us; and finally, with a world ransomed according to thy promise, receive us to thyself, and to the fruition of all our hopes in the better home on high, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

HUMILITY.

Ever-living God, thy children humbly bow themselves before thee in prayer, and in the dependency of their nature, would look up and bless thy name for food and raiment—for life and its abundant blessings. We are pensioners on the common comforts thou art so constantly bestowing on our common race; and we acknowledge that thy good providence has ever ministered its mercies unto us, in the midst of all our wants. The same hand that stretched out the visible heavens, and garnished them with their curtains of beauty, hath gifted us with an earthly existence,

that is subject to the Divine care, and that must receive every aid from God. But thou hast not forsaken us—thou hast never left us comfortless. While the upper worlds have engaged thy notice or claimed thy sustaining strength,—man has also seen thy favor surrounding every step of his pilgrimage, and the necessities of his feeble nature have been unable to escape thy ceaseless regard. Let us learn to justly consider the greatness of thy compassion towards us, as we are thus made the favored subjects of thy tender solicitude for our welfare,—and having a clear conception of the great things thy goodness has done for us, let us be humble in heart and reverent in thought before thee. Teach us that life itself is the permission of thy pleasure; and with the evidences of thy greatness spread over us in the heavens above, and speaking to us from the earth beneath, may we see our own littleness, and learn from it to walk in thy sight as best becomes our false estate. Gird our hearts with that good spirit, that shall enable us to weigh our worth in the balance of the universe,—and finding that we are but a mote in the midst of immensity, may our pride be humbled—may we be submissive to thy will. Give us strength to forsake the folly of the world—to throw down its glittering idols—to turn away from its golden dust, and obey thee in all truth and earnestness of heart. Forbid, in thy wisdom, that we should glory in the feeble gifts with which thou hast blessed us—forbid that the temptations of earth should steal away our affections from thee, or that the empty echo of this world's applause should cause us to exult in our own strength. Let us turn from the vanity of these things, and learn the great lesson of hu-

mility—that God is infinite, while man is finite in his nature. Be with us, in the rich abundancy of thy goodness, to write these truths in our hearts,—and let them shine out brightly on our path in life. Thou art wise, and thy wisdom is able to enlighten our minds—its voice can call us again from our waywardness and our wanderings—it can bring us back to thee. May we thus become the objects of thy governing goodness—and thus be brought into a hallowed and near communion with thyself. Guide and guard us in life's perilous pilgrimage—enable us to confide in thee in the day of earthly duty—and exalt us finally above these scenes of strife and sorrow. And thine shall be all the praise. Amen.

GOD'S SUPERINTENDING CARE.

God of all goodness and grace,—we stand up on the shores of this lower world, to make acknowledgments for that supervision thou art ever exercising over all things that live below the sun. Our life is an evidence of its existence—and the multitude of mercies that surround that life on every hand, are but the living witnesses that testify to the same great truth. Thou wast pleased to guard our steps, in the early years of infancy, from the ills of the world—thou hast extended the same blessings to us when in the might of our manhood; and time, in its onward flight, and years, as they roll along, ever continue to tell us, that God governs all things for good. Thou hast measured out the number of our days in accordance with the same superintending care,—and

the temporal bounties that thicken and throng about our path, are the precious proofs of thy regard for a world that is lying in want. If we rise from a view of these wonderful works of thy hand in the outer world—if we inquire for the provision thou hast made for the wider wants of the human soul,—we shall here see a display of thy most abundant grace. While the earthly body has been fed with the fruit of the ground,—the soul itself,—that ever-living emanation from thyself, has been nourished with bread from heaven. When we were without God and without hope—when our souls were sad, and darkness shut our sight,—thou wast pleased to reveal thyself most gloriously unto us—to drive away our doubts, and cheer us in the midst of our sadness. Since then, the spiritual man has put on his strength,—bright hopes hover around his pathway, and a faith that fills his heart with joy, has thrown its radiance over the scenes of the future. By these glorious gifts, life is cheered by a voice that speaks to us in the language of peace; and its soothing accents are able to hush our sorrows and dry our tears away. Give us confidence in these rich revelations of thy divine will,—and may that confidence be increased as the things of time and earth shall pass from our sight. And when life itself shall have accomplished thy pleasure, and its last, lingering sands have run their allotted course, wilt thou lift us up on high, and bless us with life and love, in a day without darkness—in a world without sin. Amen.

THE GOSPEL.

O THOU, who art the Father and Friend of man, we would bow ourselves before thy throne, and worship thee in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. We would render our united thanks to thee, that thou hast created us in thine own image, capable of contemplating thy mighty works and ways, and of rejoicing in the blessings of the gospel. We give thee praise for all thy gifts, and especially for the religion of thy Son. O Lord, we feel that we can never be sufficiently thankful for this rich blessing. Adored be thy name for the instruction it imparts; for the consolation it brings to the afflicted, and for the revelation it makes of thy adorable character. We thank thee, righteous God, that it enables us to look to thee as the Father and Friend of all mankind, and to put our trust in thee for time and for eternity.

We thank thee for the gracious assurance it gives of life and immortality in another and a better world, where the parting tear shall not flow, nor the pangs of separation be felt; where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither any more pain. We thank thee for the encouragement it gives to the virtuous, and for the inducement it holds out to the sinner to repent and turn to God, and walk in the way of duty. O may we gladly receive its instructions into good and honest hearts, and ever rejoice in obeying its commands. May we constantly feel its sacred influence, and be governed by its benign spirit.

O wilt thou forgive our ingratitude and opposition to thee. Forgive all our sins, and assist us to live nearer to thee, and be more devoted to the religion of thy Son. May its power be felt, and its blessings enjoyed by the whole family of man, that thy kingdom may come, and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

O Lord, wilt thou bestow upon us all needed blessings. Make us kind and courteous, and enable us to seek each others' good in all things. Suffer us not to be influenced by anger, ill-will, or revenge; but may we patiently bear with each other, and cherish a gentle and forgiving temper. May our home ever be the abode of true peace and joy. Make us not only kind to each other, but kind to all men. May we love our enemies; bless those who curse us, and do good to those that hate us and despitefully use us.

We ask these favors and offer these thanks, in the name of Jesus Christ, through whom to thee shall be given all the praise, forever. Amen.

HUMILITY AND PRAYER.

O THOU, who hearest and answerest prayer, in obedience to thy holy will, we humbly bow ourselves at thine altar, that we may worship thee as the high and holy Ruler of heaven and earth, before whom angels reverently bow, and archangels veil their faces.

With what deep humility should we, thy erring children, approach thy throne! When we reflect that we are bowing before a Being of infinite

purity, and offering our feeble prayer with those holy beings who pay to thee unceasing homage, we feel our great unworthiness of so exalted a service, and humbly pray that our petition may be acceptable, and call down thy blessing.

We rejoice, most merciful Father, that thy condescension and love are so great toward thy children, that, notwithstanding our sins and ingratitude, thou hast encouraged our addresses to thee, and promised gracious answers to our prayers. We would, therefore, with child-like confidence, filial fear and reverence, raise our thoughts to thee, and address the throne of thy grace in humble prayer. O may we duly appreciate this gracious privilege, and never be among those who draw near to thee with their lips, while their hearts are cold and indifferent; but may we ever offer thee the sacrifices of a broken and contrite spirit. Wilt thou, O Lord, enable us to realize that we are in thy sacred presence, holding communion with a Being of infinite wisdom, almighty power, and perfect holiness; to whom all the purposes, desires and wants of the heart are known. O wilt thou teach us to pray aright, as becomes thy children. Prepare the sacrifice, that we may worship thee in the beauty of holiness. Send thy spirit into our souls, and touch our unhallowed lips with a sacred coal from thine altar, that we may not bring to thee a vain oblation. May the sacred fire of divine love, burning upon the altar of our hearts, be continually increasing, and the incense of devotion and gratitude ever ascend to thee, our God.

We thank thee that thou dost permit us to pray —to render thanks to thy name—to ask thy for-

giveness, and bring to thee the wants and the burdens of our souls. May we ever enjoy this blessed privilege, and by rightly improving it, drink in thy spirit and assimilate our characters to thine.

And while we enjoy this privilege, may we not forget that, although thou dost delight in the sacrifice of prayer when offered upon the altar of sincere hearts, yet to love thee with all the soul, and our neighbor as ourselves, is more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.

Wilt thou, O Lord, forgive our sins, and prepare us for the enjoyment of all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. Amen.

FOR GUIDANCE IN A SEASON OF PERPLEXITY AND CARE.

Creator and Ruler of all things! thou hast said, Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. In the strength of this promise we come to thee now. We beseech thee to consider our trouble—to regard our wants. We do not murmur against thee, O Father, because of our present condition; we feel that thou dost all things well. But we pray, if it may accord with thy will, that we may be delivered from this our perplexity—that these circumstances of embarrassment may pass away—that this heavy burden of care may be removed. In forming plans of escape from these evils, do thou, O God, enlighten us by thy wisdom, and crown our efforts with thy blessing. Pardon us wherein we may have been guilty of impru-

dence, or any sin that has led us into this perplexity and trouble. And, Father, do thou in thy great mercy relieve us, and bring us out from this darkness and trial. But if such be not thy will, O God, help us to bear all with a right spirit—to meet our troubles with resignation—to consider our sins and follies with penitence, and to believe and trust in thee. Sanctify unto us this time of trial; let it be of lasting profit to our souls. Fit us for all the vicissitudes of life. Let all its dispensations help to form us for that state of being where sorrow and sin are unknown, and where all is peace and holiness and love.

In the midst of our troubles we would not forget thy goodness. O Father, thou hast never deserted us, nor failed to be merciful unto us; and when we think of thy love and our sins, we feel that with shame and not murmuring, with gratitude and not complaint, we should ever come before thee. Forgive our many sins. We thank thee for thine innumerable gifts of goodness, and pray thee to hear our petitions, and accept our offerings. We ask all in Jesus' name. Amen.

PRAYER FOR KIND DISPOSITIONS.

FATHER in heaven! we come to thee as the Source of all goodness, and lift up our hearts in earnest prayer that thou wouldst give us grace, and help us to cherish love towards each other. O Father, pardon all the sins that we have committed, as the members of a family, in indulging wrong feelings, bitterness, envy, or anger, against any who dwell beneath this roof, or meet

around this altar. Show us clearly the duties that we owe to each other, and incline our hearts to perform these duties. Help us to cherish forbearance, charity and kindness. When any of these injure us, help us to forgive, and when we injure any of these, prompt us to penitence. O God, we pray that we may be kind in thought, word, and deed, like thy dear Son. Let thy peace and thy blessing be within this our family circle. Assist us to bear each others' infirmities, to heal each others' sickness, to sympathize with and to soothe each other, to counsel and support, in all the vicissitudes of life.

And, O God, expand our hearts, that we may extend our kind disposition to all our race. May we remember how much thou hast borne with us, and yet how ready thou art to forgive—how often we sin against thee, and yet how unfailing and plenteous are thy mercies. And may we endeavor to imitate thee, not only as members of a family, one towards another, but in all our conduct to our fellow-men. Pardon all our sins. Accept our thanks for all thy mercies. Guide us through life, and finally receive us to that home, where, though faith and hope are not required, love forever abounds. These favors we ask and thanks we offer in Christ's name. Amen.

THE DIVINE LAW.

Thou infinitely great, and all-wise Governor of the universe; thee we adore as the Framer of our bodies, the Father of our spirits, and the wise Director of all harmony and order. For our good

thou hast issued thy commandments, and ordained righteous observances. Thou, Lord, art our Lawgiver, our Judge, and our King. But we come into thy presence as guilty creatures. We approach thy holiness, sin-polluted and defiled. We have *all* sinned, and come short of thy glory. With shame and humiliation we are obliged to confess, that while we are the daily recipients of thy bounty, and under a full knowledge of thy holy requisitions, we have dared to rebel against thee, and to requite thy goodness with cold ingratitude. But we approach thee as the Fountain of infinite mercy, and implore that forgiveness which we so much need. We beseech thee to create within us a new heart, and to renew right spirits within us, that we may better be prepared to serve thee with reverence and godly fear. Thou, Lord, knowest our hearts; cleanse us, then, from all filthiness of the flesh, and make us to walk before thee with a willing mind, and with an upright heart.

Do thou, O our God, enlighten us more and more in the knowledge of thy prohibitions and commandments, and in the means of thy forgiveness. We would pray not in ignorance—we would ask not in opposition to thy will. If we are suffering now the penalties of laws unstudied and neglected,—if, either in mind, body, or estate, we are now reaping the fruits of disobedience unlooked for by us; we pray for wisdom to search out thy laws, and to place ourselves in ready obedience to them. Will the Lord grant unto the world more of this wisdom. Save it from superstition, from gross credulity and error, from unreasonable expectancy of Divine and sov-

ereign interference. O thou Great First Cause; teach us, we beseech thee, the connection thou has established through all the moral and natural interests of man:—that without obedience there is no happiness—that without repentance there is no forgiveness—that without a moral, serious, personal exertion on our part, there is neither repentance, forgiveness, nor peace. Grant, then, unto the world, this wisdom. Let the truth be established in our minds, that the order of thy government is the order of indissoluble, eternal, and connected causes—that this chain cannot be broken—that, sure as the eternal throne, thy forgiveness is regulated by our obedience, and thy rewards, whether of body or of mind, by our unswerving faithfulness.

To thee, then, do we come, O our Judge, and of thee do we ask a reasonable blessing. Enlighten us in thy law. Let obedience to it save us from the ills of life, and the love of it be our rational affection. With thy servant of old may we also exclaim—O how I love thy law; it is my meditation all the day. I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold. I esteem all thy precepts; I hate every false way.

And now, O God, have mercy upon us. We confess our iniquities, but still do we have occasion to rejoice. We rejoice, that notwithstanding our sins are great and grievous to be borne, thy grace is all-sufficient for us. Direct our minds, then, to the cross of him whose blood cleanseth from all sin, and extend to us the healing waters of forgiveness. May the fountain which was opened in the house of Judah for sin and for uncleanness, purify our hearts, and wash us from every

corruption. And finally, when all thy purposes of grace shall have been accomplished, may we stand upon the heavenly hills, with all the blood-washed millions, to sing thy praises, and chant thy conquering grace, where the sting of death which was sin, and the strength of sin which was the law, shall not interrupt the eternal jubilee, through the Lamb of God who hath gotten us the victory. Amen.

THE PERCEPTION, REALIZATION, AND GUIDANCE OF GOD'S WISDOM.

Thou infinitely wise and incomprehensible Jehovah, who art the Framer of the worlds and the Source of all wisdom; we adore thee, as our God, and call upon thee as our Benefactor and Friend. We would take confidence in our approaches to thee, O Lord, from the revelations of nature and of grace. From the heavens above, and from the earth beneath, thine infinite skill and care are manifest to our eyes; and no less, the sweet and cheering evidences of thy goodness. For thy wisdom is but the wisdom of love, thy power is but the power of love. Wherever they are put forth for the purposes of creation, they are exerted for the happiness of thy creatures; and there is no power, nor wisdom, nor device, nor knowledge, but is directed to this most gracious end. We praise thee, O Lord, and confess thy boundless skill in the fashioning of our mortal bodies—in the irrational creation—and in all the hosts which burn and blaze above us; for they are all thine, and by the greatness of thy power not one faileth.

Let us lift up our eyes, and behold who hath created these things. The heavens declare thy glory, and the firmament showeth thy handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all.

We adore thee, O God, for the glory of thy manifestations to the world—for all the tokens of thy kind care and protection. Impress, we beseech thee, more of these thoughts upon our minds. Incline us to a study of thy works, that we may realize thy constant care, and rejoice in the knowledge of thy goodness.

But, more especially, direct us to the study of that wisdom which relates to our redemption from sin and death. Here thou hast destroyed the wisdom of the wise, and brought to nothing the understanding of the prudent. O may we receive Jesus as a teacher from thee, and drink in his benign spirit. Father, hear us. Hear us and answer us through thy Son. Make us wise unto salvation. And into that scheme of grace where angels desired to look, may our thoughts find entrance. Fill us with all necessary knowledge. Save us from blindness of mind and perverseness of heart. Grant unto us a portion of that spirit by which thy sacred oracles were dictated, that we may investigate aright—that we may discern spiritual things—that our faith may not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

O Lord, our God, we would not only perceive thy wisdom, and realize it in nature and in grace, but we pray most fervently to be under its divine guidance through all our lives. And do thou

help us to pray in faith, and look to thee for assistance. We are weak, but thou art mighty. We are poor, and sinful, and erring, but thou art rich, and holy, and omniscient. Supply us from thy treasures—instruct us with thy knowledge—and let us especially glory in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

And now, Father, we commit ourselves to thy supreme direction. We would walk in thy ways through all our lives—we would adore and magnify thy name in this world; and in the future, when the scales of ignorance shall drop from our eyes, we would join with all the hosts of the celestial, clothed with white robes, and palms in our hands, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and riches, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever. Amen.

THE REALIZATION AND EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S MERCY.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful God—thou who art the fountain of life, and light, and everlasting love; we adore thee as the Author of all our blessings, and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We would approach thee, all weak and sinful as we are, and rejoice in the gracious provisions of thy love and mercy. Thou, Lord, wert prompted by thine own inherent goodness to wake us into existence, and through the whole of our lives thou hast crowned that existence with good. Thou hast provided for all our circum-

stances; thou hast ministered to all our bodily and mental wants. Even when we have forgotten thee, and wandered far from thee in the paths of error and sin, thou hast never forgotten or forsaken us, but hast been kind unto us—unto us, even the evil and unthankful. Thou hast shielded us from dangers both seen and unseen, and even now we are before thee, in the attitude of devotion, as monuments of thy preserving mercy.

O Lord, do thou unfold to us more and more of the designs of thy goodness, that we may give unto thee the glory which is due unto thy name. Instruct us in thy providence. Give us to know, that many a time, when we have been thoughtless, then thine arm has been beneath us, and thy all-sustaining goodness around us. O God, thy goodness and mercy have followed us all the days of our lives.

Infinite Father, we thank thee for the abundant provisions of thy mercy in the Gospel of our salvation. We thank thee, that when the world was dead in sin, and all its inhabitants had forgotten thee, then thou didst look down in pity upon our revolted race. Blessed be thy glorious name, that thou didst send thy Son for our deliverance; that he labored and died for us; that he trod the wine-press alone, and when of the people there was none to help him, did by his own arm bring unto us salvation. We thank thee for his holy life; for his pure benevolence; for his tender mercies to the sick, the dying, the bereaved, and the unfortunate; and for all the recorded traits of his kindness, and gentleness, and love. In him would we discern thy image, and behold an exhibition of thy mercy for all the children of men.

And now, thou Father of mercies, we pray for the guidance of thy wisdom, and the consolations of thy truth, through all the days of our life. Be with us in the days of adversity, and comfort us with a good hope through faith. Be with us when we are tempted to turn aside from thy ways, —in our sins and our weaknesses, and save us from destruction. Be with us in all trials, in scenes of darkness, desolation and death, and administer unto us out of the rich abundance of thy grace. Let light shine in upon our darkness. Let sorrow give place to joy. O may it be the sentiment of our hearts, in all these scenes of mourning,—For a small moment hast thou forsaken us, but with great mercies wilt thou gather us; in a little wrath thou didst hide thy face from us for a moment, but with everlasting kindness thou wilt have mercy on us, saith the Lord our Redeemer. Hear us in heaven, thy dwelling-place. Grant us all needed good. Forgive us our sins; and, finally, receive us to thyself, in glory, where we shall have full experience of thy mercy in the joys which flow at thy right hand. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

JOY AND PEACE OF THE GOSPEL.

Thou Source of all consolation, and God of all grace; by thy gracious promises, revealed in thy holy word, we are encouraged to come to thee, and, in sincerity of heart and with childlike trust, to offer unto thee our prayers and supplications,

that our faith may be enlarged, our joy increased, and our spiritual strength renewed. Wilt thou, O God, lift upon us the light of thy countenance, and fill our hearts with peace. May that fear which hath torment be entirely banished from our minds, that we may be made perfect in love, and cherish that reverence which is the beginning of all true wisdom.

O Lord, we feel to rejoice that we are permitted to live in a land of Gospel light and privileges. We thank thee that we are permitted to know so much of thee and of thy Son, Jesus Christ. We thank thee that there is unspeakable joy in believing the Gospel,—a joy which the world can neither give nor take away. May our souls be baptized into the spirit of thy Son, and possess that perfect peace which is a balm for every wound,—a solace in every affliction. O Lord, impart unto us a more perfect knowledge of thy gracious promises in Christ Jesus. Enable us to believe in him as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world,—and to realize that he gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Help us to look by faith beyond this ever-changing world to that glorious state where there shall be no more death,—where the ransomed of the Lord shall sing to thee songs of everlasting thanksgiving. O Lord, may we not only rejoice in believing, but may we remain steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Heavenly Father, we feel our need of spiritual strength,—of wisdom from on high,—of more faith and hope and confidence in thee and in thy

Son. We realize how weak, how frail, how imperfect we are. Give us, we beseech thee, grace sufficient for us, in every time of need. Help us to repose our trust in thee, as the God, the Judge, and the Father of all men. Wilt thou bless us, and all men with the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ. Pardon all our sins, and, finally, accomplish the designs of thy infinite goodness, in the complete salvation of a sinful world. And to thy name, through Jesus Christ, shall be all the praise. Amen.

PURITY OF HEART AND LIFE.

O THOU most merciful Jehovah, the Father of our spirits, and the Giver of every good and perfect gift; we desire to bow before thee, the most High God, and offer unto thee that adoration which a just sense of thy goodness is calculated to inspire. Thou, O God, art the fountain from which flow all those blessings that render this world so pleasant and happy. Thy kindness towards us is manifest in all the relations of life —in all the duties thou hast enjoined—in all the labors, physical, mental and moral, which are requisite to our happiness; and in all the afflictions and chastisements with which we are visited.

And, O Father, we most devoutly and sincerely pray, that we may possess in our hearts, and be enabled to exhibit in our lives, a measure of the same spirit of kindness and good will towards all men, which was so fully displayed in

the example of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;—that, being like him, we may enjoy that peace of mind which is dearer than all things else. May we strive to possess more and more of that love and good will toward our enemies, which shone so conspicuously in the life of Jesus Christ, that we may overcome evil with good, and thus become, practically, the children of our Father in heaven. May no unkind thoughts or feelings be suffered to abide in our minds; but may the spirit of love to thee, and kindness to our fellow-beings, ever be cherished by us. Wilt thou, Father, imbue our hearts more and more with thy love, that we may glorify thee in all things. Forgive us our sins, we humbly pray thee—guide us in the way of peace and truth—reconcile us and all mankind to thy will—sustain us in the hour of death, and, finally, bring us to the enjoyment of a holier and happier life; and thine shall be the praise forever, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

JEHOVAH, A GOD OF HOPE.

O Thou, God of hope, who art from everlasting to everlasting, lift thou upon us the light of thy countenance; and grant us, we humbly beseech thee, the influences of thy Holy Spirit, that we may be enabled to draw near unto thee with true hearts, in the full assurance of faith, and in the spirit of filial love and gratitude; that we may commune with thee, and enjoy a refreshing from thy presence.

We thank thee, Almighty God, that thou wast pleased to give us an existence; to endow us with a nature akin to thine own; to adapt us to the world in which we are placed, and to surround us with all that is necessary to our progress and happiness, as moral, social and intellectual beings. We thank thee that thou hast implanted in our souls that everlasting hope which sustains and cheers us in all the trials of life; which leads the mind up to thee, as to the Rock of eternal ages, on which it may rest in safety and peace, amidst all the storms and tempests of life; and which carries the mind onward and upward, to that higher and holier life which thou hast prepared as the incorruptible inheritance of the whole purchased possession; and into the enjoyment of which we hope to be brought, when mortality shall have been swallowed up of life.

We pray, Father, that our minds may be enlightened by thy truth; that, by faith in thy promises, we may find peace in every season of affliction. May no trials cause us to doubt thy goodness, but may the consideration that thou dost not willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men, lead us ever to hope in thee. And wilt thou, the God of hope, fill us with joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

THANKSGIVING TO GOD.

FATHER of our spirits and Former of our bodies, in whom we live, and move, and have our being,

who hast endowed us with all our powers of body and mind, and from whom we receive every blessing suited to all our wants; we devoutly ask thy assistance in offering our thanksgivings, acknowledgments and prayers to thee, according to thy will. We thank thee for our physical senses, which thou hast, in thy goodness, constituted mediums of enjoyment. We thank thee for our mental and moral powers, by which we are enabled to discover and to realize thy favor in every good and perfect gift we receive from thee. We thank thee for all the duties thou requirest of us, as thou hast given us to know that they are all designed for our good, perfectly adapted to our moral nature, and constitute our highest improvement and rational enjoyment. We thank thee for the endearments which we enjoy in our family connection. They are as sweet and fragrant flowers in our path-way of life, soothing to our hearts in seasons of affliction, and comforting us in the darkness of sorrow. We thank thee for our lot in a land of freedom; of good and wholesome laws, which guard our lives, our characters, and secure to us the fruits of our labor, our industry and our prudence. We thank thee for thine unspeakable gift, to our whole race, in the Gospel of thy Son; a light to our feet and a lamp to our path; a full commendation of thy paternal love to man as thine own offspring. We thank thee that thou hast revealed to us, through this gift, the forgiveness of our errors and our wrongs; and taught us to forgive all who harm or injure us. We, most devoutly and with unutterable joy, thank thee for the glorious hope of immortality and eternal life, brought to light

through the Gospel; a hope which is as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, entering into that within the vail, whether the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus our High Priest.

We confess to thee, O Lord, our numerous sins. We have, instead of resisting the temptations of the flesh, yielded to their beguiling charms, violated thy paternal precepts, and filled our souls with sorrow. Forgive us, thou who art gracious; have mercy on us, for thou art merciful. May thy goodness lead us to repentance, and thy wisdom guide our feet in the way of peace. Give us hearts to love thee, for thou art lovely; and a will to obey thy just and holy laws. Wilt thou continually set before us the righteousness of thy beloved Son; and may we be meek and lowly in heart, like him; and as it was his meat and drink to do thy will, and to suffer the just for the unjust, may the same mind be in us, that we may be blessed of thee. And when we shall have served our generation, according to thine own will, may we close our earthly pilgrimage in confident hope of thine everlasting favor. Amen.

GOD'S GOODNESS AND MAN'S INGRATITUDE.

Most gracious Father, we praise thee for that firm faith in thy mercy, which enables us, frail, sinful, and unworthy as we are, to come into thy presence, recognising thee not only as our Creator and Ruler, but as our bountiful Benefactor. We cannot, it is true, look upon thee with our

eyes, and hear thy voice uttering itself in an audible manner from out the heavens, but we can behold thy goings forth in all this beautiful world, which demonstrates thy goodness, wisdom, and power; and here, as in thy word, can we learn holy lessons of thee. We thank thee for these exhibitions of thyself, and for the bestowment of all those powers and capacities which enable us to drink in the delights they are calculated to afford.

We confess, with shame, our disregard of thy commands, and our indifference to thy holy requisitions. Thou hast nursed us and watched over us during every period of our lives; but we have forsaken thee, and sinned against thy holy name. We have been unmindful of thy goodness, and have wickedly transgressed thy laws, bringing condemnation and wo upon our own souls. Notwithstanding our wanderings, thy mercy and thy goodness fail not. O God, our most merciful Father, we would devoutly praise thee, that thy ways are not our ways—that while we are unforgiving and unkind, thou art ever forgiving and kind,—that, although we have forsaken thee, thou hast not forsaken us. We thank thee, that though enshrouded in darkness and buried in ignorance, thou hast made the day-star of thy love to arise upon us, and the sun of righteousness to dispel our darkness, and illumine our hearts.

Warm our souls with gratitude to thee, for the spiritual blessings brought us in the Gospel of Christ. Grant that his holy example may be our guide, and his truth the rule of our lives. As we rise in the morning, may our thoughts ascend to thee; and as we lay ourselves down at night,

may we pray for thy guardian care. Let thine arms of mercy encircle us, and thy fatherly care be over us. Guide us, amid all the duties of life, in the straight and narrow way; and may none of the temptations that throng around us lead us from thee, or in the slightest degree mar our peace. Let thy love be richly shed abroad in our hearts, and fit us for every good word and work; making us a family truly blessed,—a family, whose God is the Lord.

And, O our Father, should we be called to endure affliction, or feel the weight of adversity's pressure, speak to us, we pray thee, in the tones of holy consolation, and make us bow before thee with that prayer in our hearts, spontaneously rising to our lips, which was uttered by Jesus in the hour of his peril, "Not my will, but thine be done." Through thy rich mercy forgive us every sin; fit us for, and sustain us in, the hour of death; and, finally, crown us, and the world of mankind, with blessedness immortal, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE GUIDANCE AND SPIRIT OF THE GOSPEL.

Father of mercies and God of all grace, with suitable feelings would we praise thee, day by day, for thy manifold blessings. Thou alone art good and merciful. Thy power made the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth. Thy love hath strewed our pathway with flowers, and kindled emotions of joy and gladness in our hearts. But, O God, thou hast ever been good

and kind unto us, we acknowledge our sinfulness and ingratitude, inasmuch as we have transgressed thy laws, and dishonored thy name before men. Wilt thou, by the continued exhibitions of thy goodness, lead us to repent of every sin and humbly implore thy pardon. Give us the meek and humble mind of Jesus, and make his holy life our model, and his truth our guide. Give us a proper sense of our indebtedness to thee, for the unparalleled exhibitions of righteousness furnished us in the example of him, who was the "brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." Make us to love him as our Redeemer, and honor him as the Captain of our salvation.

May the Gospel of truth, which he hath established, and which is good tidings of good unto all people, be blessed of thee, until it shall have triumphed over error and sin, and banished them from the universe; until man shall no more oppress his fellow-man; until the chains of the slave shall be sundered, and the yoke shall be removed from his neck; until war and strife shall cease,—oppression and wrong shall be done away,—and man shall love his neighbor as himself.

Make that Gospel, we pray thee, efficacious in the purification of each of our hearts; and help us to love thee and keep thy commandments. In all the great struggles of life may we be led by its teachings; and may our lives continually manifest its spirit. Arm us, in the hour of temptation, with its holy power, that we may receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

Prepare us, by the hopes and consolations of religion, for all the trials, and dangers, and afflictive providences of life, that we may ever bow in meek submission to thy will, and maintain that quiet composure, and that Christian calmness, which make the loveliest characteristics of the followers of Christ. And, when death shall come to us, like thy servant of old, may we fear no evil; but, with confident hopes of a blissful resurrection through Jesus Christ, may we go to our rest in peace. Amen.

DIVINE AID AND DIRECTION.

Most holy and ever-living God! we would realize that thou art infinite in all thine adorable perfections, and that before thee we are as nothing. It is not by our own merits, but by thine unpurchased favor, O God, that we enjoy life and all its blessings. And whilst we devoutly thank thee for those mercies which are new every morning and fresh every evening—by which our lives are prolonged, and our various domestic, social and spiritual blessings are perpetuated—we would humbly ask of thee that outpouring of thy Spirit upon our hearts, that will enable us ever to realize as we should our entire dependence upon thee for all things desirable. And may these multiform blessings, which our own sinfulness does not deter thee from daily bestowing upon us, awaken us to that devout gratitude, which may manifest itself in a cheerful obedience to thy laws. Forbid, Holy Father,

that we should presume to stand in our own strength, in the various pursuits and trials to which we are called. May we look unto thee for direction and assistance in the performance of every duty; for we acknowledge that we have no light or strength but that which proceeds from thy Spirit, and can have no true enjoyment except it be kindled by thy smile. Continue, we pray thee, the bestowment of food, and raiment, and all things necessary to bodily comfort. Continue to shed upon our minds the cheering light of thy Gospel. Prepare us for a more faithful discharge of our duties to thee, to our family, and to the world; and may the example of Jesus be the pattern of our daily walk and conversation. Bless, we beseech thee, our friends and neighbors. May we all live together in peace, harmony and Christian love; and may the cause of truth and righteousness prosper throughout the earth.

Wilt thou pardon our manifold sins, and mercifully grant unto us a higher sense of communion and acceptance with thee. Give us grace so to walk as that we may adorn the Christian profession; and may we increase in all knowledge and good works before thee: and unto thy name shall be all the praise, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DIVINE MERCY.

The Lord most merciful! we yield thee the homage of our hearts, and adore thee as the

Father of all mercies, and the God of all grace. Thou art ever benignant and compassionate towards thy dependent children. Thy watchful providential care hath never been withdrawn from us; thy loving favor and kindness thou hast not withheld. In the free and full enjoyment of thy rich and exhaustless gifts hast thou permitted us to live. All our years and days have been crowned with thy tender and unfailing mercies.

What, O Lord, shall we render unto thee for that mercy which hath always strengthened and cheered our hearts, excited and encouraged the most pleasing and devout hopes in our bosoms, and which, as thou hast graciously assured us, is commensurate with the wants of our race. Accept, in thine infinite condescension, our contrite and trustful spirits; and may we exercise towards thee that gratitude and filial affection, which it becometh thy children ever to cherish. Give us, we pray, clear and exalted conceptions of the benignancy of thy nature and of the transcendent excellence of thy character, that we may aspire after that purity of heart, and cultivate that love of moral beauty, which shall enable us to become perfect in our sphere, as thou art perfect in thine. Help us to feel, O God, that we have none in heaven but thee, and help us to desire none on earth beside thee, that our affections may thus become elevated, and our hearts rendered more and more pure.

We thank and praise thee, heavenly Parent, that whilst the ties of our common brotherhood forever bind together "all nations of men," thou hast been pleased to sanction and strengthen those ties by the authorities of a religion, which at

once recognises the unbroken fraternity of man, and the impartial clemency and watchfulness of its benignant Author. We give thee praise for the great truths of the Gospel; and for their tendency to unite man to man, and man to his God, in the bonds of fraternal and filial love; and we thank thee that, in the hopes they inspire, the moral incentives they furnish, the blissful future prospects they spread before the eye of faith, we have the most persuasive indications of their divinity, and of their healthful and saving operation on the hearts of men. May we truly feel the influences of thy Gospel, live in its light, and obey its commands; and thus, we pray thee, satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may be glad and rejoice all our days; and unto thee, through Jesus Christ, shall be given all the praise, forever and ever. Amen.

BLESSING OF SLEEP.

Father of mercies! we thank thee for the blessing of sleep; that thou dost permit us, when wearied in body, by exertion in the cares and toils of the day, to lie down in peace, and repose in safety, beneath the shadow of thy wings. Help us to realize this manifestation of thy loving-kindness, that in our conscious waking hours our thoughts may be attuned to thy holy praise.

We bless thee that such abundant provisions are allowed us for the enjoyment of sleep; that while others, by adverse circumstances, are pre-

vented from realizing, as they desire, this essential comfort of life,—while they have not where to shelter themselves in quietness and security, and hear no kindly voices of affection blessing them as they retire to their nightly slumbers, we, O Father, realize thy ample bestowments, whenever our bodily necessities invite us to repose.

We bless thee, that while many of our race are doomed to live in dreadful apprehension of threatening earthly evils, and seek, almost in vain, their pillows for repose, thou dost secure us from such fears, and invite us to rest in confidence and safety. We bless thee that our sleep is not interrupted by debility or disease; that while multitudes find no sleep, from enduring pain, and turn in vain for relief,—and while others are looking for exemption from suffering only to the sleep of death; thou dost impart unto us such healthful vigor, that our slumbers are sweet and refreshing, —that they quicken and renew our powers for continued duty to thee, to ourselves, and to our fellow-creatures. As we praise thee for these blessings, we would humbly beseech that our nightly rest may never be commenced nor ended without a humble and devout acknowledgment of thy goodness, humiliation in view of our forgetfulness of thy beneficence, and filial trust in thy never-failing mercies.

Enable us, Lord, so to live day by day, that the hour of nightly repose shall be greeted with satisfaction and delight; that then conscience shall not censure us for duties neglected nor opportunities abused; but soothe us with hallowing convictions of duty well and faithfully done. So instruct us to pass the time of our sojourning here,

that at its close we may, in holy trust, fall asleep in Jesus, to rise in his glorious image, and enjoy thy perfect love in a day without night, in a world without end. Amen.

SOCIAL RELATIONS AND DUTIES.

GIVER of every good and perfect gift! we devoutly acknowledge thy goodness unto us in the bestowments and blessings of our social existence. We praise thee that thou didst in the beginning constitute man a social being, and hast so clearly confirmed this truth in the past history and present condition of our race. Especially would we thank thee for the social enjoyments of home; for the attractions and delights of the family circle, for the mutual interests herein realized, and the means thou hast given us to promote them. Enable us so to discharge the duties demanded of us in thy Word, that our household may be consecrated to thee, and all the joys, trials or afflictions of home be sanctified by the direct influences of thy grace and truth.

Enable us, O Lord, to extend our sympathies to all who hold communion with us in the intercourse of life; that to them we may do good as we have opportunity. And also, graciously instruct us in that holy truth of the brotherhood of man, so impressively taught in the life and mission of our Lord Jesus Christ. Make us to realize that none of us liveth to himself; that we have all one Father; that all, to whom we can do good, are our neighbors; and that mercy to

needy, suffering man, is more acceptable to thee than whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.

In view of these relations and duties, help us, O Lord, to be faithful. Teach us to rejoice with those who rejoice, and to weep with those who weep; to be kind unto the unthankful and evil; to love even our enemies, as Christ our exemplar hath directed us in his precept and example; to abjure all fraud and injustice; to raise up them that are bowed down; to unbind the heavy burden, and let the oppressed go free; to enlighten the ignorant, strengthen the weak, console the desponding, and seek to give spiritual life to the fainting and dying soul. And for aid in all these duties, direct us to the Gospel of thy Son, which is always thy power unto salvation to every one that believeth.

And wilt thou, gracious Parent, grant us that living and abiding faith which assures us that although the endearments and delights of earthly social existence must cease; although here relation and friend must be separated, and families and households dissolved; that beyond all transitory scenes, in worlds of immortal life, these friendships and affections shall be renewed and perpetuated,—shall delight and bless us forever. And to thy name be all the praise, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

GRATITUDE, TRUST AND OBEDIENCE.

Greatest and best of beings! feeling our dependence on thee, we would humbly offer a

tribute of thanksgiving and praise. Though thou art high and lifted up, we know thou wilt listen to us, if we come with contrite and penitent hearts. And may we ever realize that thou knowest all our thoughts and all our ways; that, though we may deceive others, we cannot deceive thee. Grant us thine aid while we approach thee, and may we forget the cares and toils of life, and give thee our purest affections. We thank thee for the unnumbered favors thou hast bestowed upon us, both temporal and spiritual; especially for the privilege of holding communion with thee. How calm and holy is the thought that when there is no human ear to hear, nor eye to pity, that we can come to thee; that when storms and tempests beat upon us, we can call upon thy name, and find that comfort which the world can neither impart nor take away. O, our Father, we would come to thee, not only when the cup of sorrow is given us to drink, but when prosperity smiles around us; for thou art the Fountain of pure and unfailing felicity. Merciful Father, we feel our great ingratitude. We are encircled in the arms of thy mercy, and yet we are unconscious of thy presence. Forgive us our past unmindfulness, and may our future faithfulness evince the sincerity of our hearts.

We adore thee for the bright and beautiful manifestations thou hast made of thyself to the world. We see thee in everything thou hast formed, from the floating atom to the worlds of light and beauty that roll around thy throne; from the frail plant that perishes to the everlasting stars in their courses. Where can we go and not find thee? Thou art in all, and thou art

constantly blessing all men. Nothing exists without thee; not even the sparrow falleth to the ground without thy notice. And while thou art guiding the most distant world, and receiving the adoration of the seraphim that burn at thy throne, thou art mindful of the wants of the meanest creature thy power and benevolence have brought into existence. O thou Giver of all good! may we never forget thee, for thou hast never forgotten us. Days have passed when thy mercies have been overlooked, yet thou hast kindly borne with us, and brought us on thus far in life. O Lord, we would commend ourselves to thy care and protection; and whether our future days are marked with adversity or prosperity, may we ever lift to thee the voice of thanksgiving and gratitude. These favors we humbly ask in the name of him who came to save a sinful world, and to thee would we ascribe all honor and glory forever. Amen.

ON THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

Our Father who art in heaven: in thy holy presence we bow, and to thee lift up our hearts. We thank thee for the gift of thy Son, our Teacher, Pattern and Saviour, but now especially for the pure, subduing and improving lesson of his death. We bless thee that though he possessed endowments superior to those of man, and was capable of avoiding the severest trials and securing to himself the richest and most desirable of earth's blessings, yet he came into our world to

inculcate, by word and example, thy great and merciful religion. We bless thee, that when arrested by violent hands, he resisted not, but yielded, without complaint, to the power of his adversaries, patiently heard their words of insult and scorn, and, like a lamb, having neither spot nor blemish, suffered upon the cross, and gave his life a ransom for all men.

Especially do we bless thee that in his hour of gloom, agony and death, he manifested most forcibly the spirit of heaven, and gave tokens of compassion and benevolence, never before witnessed. O Lord, we thank thee, that when hanging upon the cross, he prayed for his enemies, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." We rejoice that thus he exhibited to the children of men a moral power calculated to remove all sin, and to enlighten and purify all human intelligences. O most holy Parent, may we, thy frail and erring children, in our homes and places of secular toil,—in our social and civil pursuits,—in all private and public assemblies,—and wheresoever we may be placed, be inclined, by the character of our Redeemer, so perfectly displayed on the mount of crucifixion, to wisely govern our passions and rightly cultivate and direct our affections. O may we be so instructed and improved, that we shall be prepared to bear, with true submission, all discouragements, persecutions and even the pangs of martyrdom. These favors we ask through him who was slain, and is now seated on thy right hand; and through him, also, we ascribe all honor and glory to thy great name. Amen.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

Great Parent Power, who reignest in all worlds and in all time, God over all blessed forevermore, we, thy dependent and erring children, would draw near to thee, with feelings of true devotion, that we may worship the Eternal and the Infinite in the beauty of holiness. We would reverence thee as a Being of adorable and changeless perfections, and come before thy presence as children approach a tender and beloved father, to thank thee for that loving kindness which has ever been over us, and in prayer to ask the continuance of thy blessing. Especially do we desire devoutly to thank thee for Him who is the brightness of thy glory, and the express image of thy person. We praise thy great name for what he is, and what he accomplished. We rejoice in him as a bright and beautiful example of the religion he taught, and also as a triumphant Redeemer of those for whom he lived, died, and rose again from the dead. We bless thee for his life, which was a visible image of the unseen and true Divinity. In his breathing spirit of purity and love, in the ordinary actions of his life, and in his miracles of beneficence and power, as well as in his teachings of heavenly truth, we behold thy adorable character. O Lord, it is in the life of thy Son alone that we find a perfect exhibition of thy love. Through him was the living and true God fully manifest in the flesh. In him we see love efficient, diffusive and disinterested, walking among men, and pouring itself forth in ceaseless

endeavors to advance their highest interests. Mild and radiant was that love of Christ which constrains us to holiness and obedience. Adored forever be thy wisdom and goodness, that when the faded eye of mortality could not gaze on the brightness of the beatific vision, and a frail child of death could not sustain, for a moment, the incumbent weight of that glory, thou didst send forth thy Son, made in fashion as a man, not only to redeem us, but to exhibit to us a view of thy supreme excellence.

O God, enable us to perceive, in all its loveliness and peerless glory, the Redeemer's character. May it win us to himself and inspire our souls with the divine life. And enable us to see that he lived out the Gospel under the greatest trials, and thus has met one of the deep wants of our nature; and has, by this means, connected inseparably the truths of religion with the affections of men,—the heights of the intellect with the depths of the heart,—and duty with love. O, that we might look upon him, the perfection of humanity, until by love, the perfection of religion, we may be moulded into the same image of moral excellence. Aid us, O Father, to attain a living, ardent and enlightened piety, an untiring spirit of benevolence, a far-reaching sympathy, and an all-embracing charity, that we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour with well ordered lives and a godly conversation; and unto thee shall be rendered unceasing praise, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

FOR STRENGTH TO RESIST TEMPTATION.

O Lord, we come before thee, as thy frail and imperfect children, to seek that aid and strength we need. Thou hast seen fit to place us here, in a world of imperfection and sin, where temptations surround and present their illusions to deceive and betray us into sin. We see dangers at every step. Snares are spread for our souls all along our path. The tempter, O God, is ever watching every unguarded moment, and every avenue of our hearts, to lead us astray, by deluding us with promises of security and pleasure.

O Lord, we are surrounded by foes without and foes within, and are thy poor, feeble and erring children. To whom shall we go for succor, but to thee? Where shall we flee, in the hour of danger, but to the shadow of thy wings, for shelter? Oppressed with a sense of danger, imperfection and sin, we come to thee with full purpose of heart, for in thee alone is everlasting strength. Hear us in thy mercy, forgive our errors and sins, and give us that strength which will enable us successfully to baffle all the arts of the tempter.

O Father, give us wisdom to discern all the false and alluring guises which sin may assume. Give us a conscience quick as the apple of our eye, to feel the approach of harm, and strength of soul to bid the tempter fly, however alluring his charms. Forbid that we should be left to tamper with sin, lest, in an unguarded moment, we are overcome and led astray. At the first appearance of evil, give us strength to wield the

sword of the spirit with unerring aim and all-conquering power.

Without thine aid, O thou Infinite One, all our struggles with the tempter and against sin will be vain. So weak and frail are we, that we cannot stand in our own strength. Our strength, O God, is weakness. Deign therefore to listen to our cry, and grant succor to thy feeble and tempted children, lest we fall a prey to evil. Our hope is in thee alone. On thine Almighty arm we rely for strength in the hour of trial. Grant, O Father, the needed aid, and thy great name shall have all the praise, through Jesus Christ, now and forever. Amen.

PART THIRD.

MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS.

MORNING PRAYERS AT THE TABLE.

NO. I.

O Thou, God of the morning light, and of all our days; we desire now to renew our thankfulness to thee, and to confess our obligations. We thank thee for thy kind protection through the night—for the refreshment of sleep—for the return of this day's light—for the continuance of health—and for these renewed tokens of thy bounty which are now spread before us. Help us, we beseech thee, to be humbly grateful, and to eat and drink to thy glory. Prepare us for all the duties of this day, and impress upon our minds this truth—that we know not what a day may bring forth. Let us be thoughtful, serious, and obedient in all things. In all our intercourse with the world this day, let justice and benevolence guide our conduct; if we see wrong, let us endeavor to correct it; if we see suffering, let us have compassion, and if we can consistently, extend our aid. Let us pass through this day with reverence and godly fear, and be brought to its close with satisfaction and profit. Let its evening go down upon us with tranquillity and joy; or, if evil befall us—if sickness or death come upon us, prepare us, O God, for thy will, and grant us grace for all things. Let all our

days be spent in usefulness, and when those days are finished, take us to thyself in peace and rest forever, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

NO. II.

HOLY, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who art, and wast, and art to come! Thou art the King of kings, and Lord of lords—the only true Sovereign of Heaven and Earth! In all the events which have affected the interests of the human family, we discover the proofs of thy wisdom, goodness, and power. And in all that can hereafter transpire, we hope to see renewed displays of thine adorable goodness. O Lord, thou hast taught us to desire and expect the disenthralment of our race; if consistent with thy holy purpose, let us live to see the effectual and universal triumph of thy redeeming truth and love! Let sin, ignorance, and error be done away. And cause the world to rejoice, and sing for joy, while anticipating the great end of thy moral government. For this we submissively pray, as those who would be the obedient followers of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Gracious Father, make us thankful for these provisions set before us. May we realize that all good comes from thee; and that to thy guardian care we are indebted for the preservation of our lives. Keep us in thy fear during this day; guard us from all sin, and finally save us through Jesus Christ. Amen.

NO. III.

ALMIGHTY and all-knowing God! We have abundant reasons for the acknowledgment that our highest attainments fall infinitely short of thine all-comprehending wisdom, and that we are far from that perfection in virtue which our love of happiness prompts us to desire. Help us, O Lord, in all our endeavors to know the truth as thou hast established it, and aid us in forming just and holy resolutions. And when we have fixed upon a course of life altogether in accordance with thy will and the divine lessons of thy gospel, enable us, with the prize of thy approbation before us, to press forward for the rich reward. In the race which thou hast invited us to run, may we be so far successful, that others may be induced to enlist in the cause of thy dear Son, and become his devoted and faithful servants.

Stimulate us to duty by the gifts of thy bounty; and grant that we may realize that food and raiment come from thee. Make us grateful for these provisions with which our table is spread; and may we spend the strength derived from them in thy service.

O Lord, may thy truth reign in our hearts, and the hearts of all men. We pray that thy kingdom on earth may soon be permanently established, and thy will be everywhere, and by all, cheerfully obeyed. And may we, by our obedience, secure the blessings of the Redeemer's reign, and be saved from the evils of ignorance and sin. And at last may we enjoy thy great

and everlasting salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

NO. IV.

ADORABLE God! we would fervently thank thee that thou hast made such disclosures of thy character and designs, that we are enabled to find, in thy gracious communications, the most comforting assurances of divine regard for the most fallen and miserable. We bless thee for the gospel, and the divine consolations which it affords to all who believe its sacred truths. And especially do we thank thee, O God, for our Saviour Jesus Christ, who is our resurrection and our life; and who, having brought life and immortality to light, hath ascended into heaven itself, as our Forerunner there.

O Lord, while we humbly acknowledge our imperfections and our frailties, we plead for that forgiveness, and those favors, which our imperfections render indispensable. Remember, in much mercy, all who mourn; and especially those whose bereavements are recent. Let all such realize the truth and preciousness of thy promises. Wilt thou also remember the poor. O Lord, supply their wants, and be their guardian and God.

We give thee thanks for this renewed expression of thy goodness to us. Thou, O Lord, dost supply our wants; and day by day give us that sustenance requisite for our support. Thou dost even bestow upon us mercies when our hearts are cold and ungrateful. O quicken us, we beseech thee, and make us sensible of thy many

favors; and thine, through Jesus Christ, shall be all the praise. Amen.

NO. V.

Most merciful Father in heaven, who hast taught us in thy word, that, if we are faithful to confess our sins, thou wilt graciously pardon us, and grant us that repentance which is unto life; with deep contrition of heart, would we approach the throne of thy heavenly grace, acknowledging that we are sinful in thy sight, and no more worthy to be called thy children. From the earliest dawn of our being, thou hast watched over and preserved us, and thou art never weary of bestowing upon us thy favors. Yet have we failed to recognise thy hand in the gifts of life, to render thee the tribute of thanksgiving for thy mercies, and daily have we transgressed the precepts of thy word. Pardon our sins, O gracious Father, and mercifully incline us to obey the teachings of thy heavenly law. Create within us clean hearts, and renew within us right spirits, and enable us, by thy grace, to walk before thee in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our lives. Direct us by thy counsel while we journey on earth; sustain us in the hour of death; and, finally, crown us with everlasting life; and thy name shall have all the praise. Amen.

NO. VI.

Our Father, who art in heaven! we desire to hallow thy name, in our hearts, with reverence and godly fear. Do thou give us the help we

need for this purpose. Make us sensible, O God, that, though unseen, thou art verily here, with all thine adorable perfections, and that we stand continually in the presence of infinite power, and wisdom, and justice, and goodness. Make us humble and contrite before thee. Bring us to a sense of our sins and frailty; and give us, we beseech thee, that repentance which is unto salvation, and which needeth not to be repented of. May thy Holy Spirit reign in our hearts, and create within us a good and acceptable frame of mind; subduing our passions, correcting every evil practice, overcoming our love of the world, and raising all our affections to thee, the Great, the Glorious, and the Good! Teach us to know thee, and to rejoice in thy government over ourselves and over all; and may the knowledge of thy character lead us to receive thine allotments with submission, and to desire, in every situation, that thy will, rather than our own, should be done.

We thank thee, Father of mercies, for the blessings which have followed us, all our lives long, in the dispensations of providence, and in the influences of the Gospel. Thy sun hath risen, thy rains descended, upon us; food and raiment, and health, and friends, thou hast given us; thou hast made the heavens and earth a glorious palace for our dwelling; and endued us with powers to see and enjoy thee in all thy works. Above all, we bless thee for thine unspeakable gift in Jesus Christ, who hath revealed thee to our more intimate knowledge, and brought life and immortality to light.

May a sense of thy goodness ever abide with

us, in business and in retirement, in sorrow and in joy. Do thou comfort us in our trials, strengthen us against temptations, and keep us from sin. And, at last, wilt thou crown all thy favors, by raising us and all mankind to a holy and blessed immortality, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

NO. VII.

O THOU, who humblest thyself to behold the things which are in heaven and in earth! we bless thee for the condescension of thy goodness, and that we can approach the Majesty of the universe and live. We bless thee for the station thou hast given us in the scale of being, and that we can study and admire the works of thy wisdom and power. Help us, O Father, to confess that we have too often lifted our eyes with pride, and have not humbled ourselves as we ought. We praise thee that thou hast given to humility a beauty to win us from our waywardness and pride, and that its rewards are rich and abundant to those who labor to cultivate it. We thank thee that wherever we behold goodness, it is humble, and that thy Son, our Lord, was meek and lowly of heart. May we look aright upon his humility, and see how he clothed himself in humbleness of mind, and while manifesting thine own self, as the brightness of thy glory, boasted not of power, but ministered to man as a gracious benefactor. O give us grace to remember that he took not praise to himself for his goodness or works, but owned thee as the only good. Forgive us our sins, and keep afar from us the haughty spirit and the boasting tongue, and, by thy good Spirit,

so rule in us, that we may do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thee, as the disciples and followers of him who loved us and gave himself for us. Amen.

NO. VIII.

O THOU, whose inspiration giveth understanding! unto thee we look as the Source of all truth, and the Quickener of all mind. Graciously grant that we may receive all the means of instruction thou hast ordained for our improvement, but especially the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. We bless thee for the evidences that he was a Teacher sent from thee, and that our minds and hearts have been drawn within the influences of his teachings. We praise thee for their simplicity, their harmony, their adaptedness to the wants of our being—to instruct, to warn, to guide, to comfort, and to strengthen us. O Father, we thank thee for the degree in which we have yielded to the teachings of thy Son, and we pray that they may be unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. O may we not turn away from ought he has spoken—from any lesson of his lips, his life, his gracious miracles, his death, his resurrection. May they all speak to us of thy love, of the interest which thou hast in thy creatures, and of thy great and glorious purposes concerning our everlasting destiny, and teach us and incline us to be good. O give us grace to live as we pray, and like our great Exemplar glorify thee on the earth and finish the work thou hast given us to do. Sanctify us, O God, by thy truth, and may our death

teach its triumphs, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

MORNING PRAYERS.

NO. I.

God of the morning and of the evening, it is indeed of thy mercies that we are not consumed; for we are but dust,—frail and helpless creatures, liable at any moment to be crumbled by the diseases, or crushed by the calamities by which we are constantly surrounded. But in thine hand, O Lord, we are ever secure. Thou keepest us, and all that is dear to us, in perfect safety. Encircled in thy paternal and faithful arms, watched by thy sleepless eye, and protected by thy power, no evil can do us harm. The pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth at noonday, can awaken no terror within us; for our hearts are stayed upon thee, and abide under the shadow of thy wings. In every extremity and tribulation, thou art our refuge, our shield, and our God. In thy fatherly protection we unwaveringly confide; for in thee is everlasting strength, and thy mercy is great.

Very devoutly do we thank thee, O Lord, for thy great goodness to us amidst the diversified scenes of our past lives. Through every period and every vicissitude of our existence, thou hast held us in the hollow of thy hand, and been our kind and constant Benefactor. According to thine abundant mercy and grace in Christ Jesus, thou hast pardoned our iniquities, and blotted out

our transgressions. And especially do we bless thee, O our Father and infinite Friend in heaven, that thou hast mercifully preserved us through another night, and brought us in safety, and under such favorable auspices, to the light, and privileges, and comforts of another day of our fleeting existence on earth. During the defenceless hours of sleep thou hast kindly watched over us, and defended us from all harm. Our slumbers have been quiet and refreshing. Our exhausted nature has been invigorated and prepared to resume the labors which fall within our respective spheres of duty in the world.

And now, O Lord, wilt thou hear our prayer for thy blessing and guidance through this day, and all the days of future life. Give us, day by day, our daily bread. Forgive us our trespasses, and help us to forgive all who have trespassed against us. Suffer us not to be overcome by temptation, and deliver us from every evil. Make us truly discreet in the use of all the favors conferred by thy exhaustless bounty. May we be very grateful for kindred and friends, and, particularly, for those tender ties which bind us to our home, and which hallow and sweeten the intercourse between parents and children, brothers and sisters. Enable us all to walk through this, and every day of our lives, as thine own dear and dutiful children.

Very mercifully bless the absent members of this family, and of all the families of the earth, according to their respective circumstances and wants. Wilt thou extend all necessary aid to every class and condition of men throughout the world. Heal the sick, comfort the sorrowing,

sustain the widow and the fatherless, strengthen the weak, enlighten the ignorant, and turn the feet of the wandering everywhere into the path of wisdom and of duty.

And, especially, O our Father, wilt thou make us suitably thankful for our high religious privileges and hopes; for the teachings of thy holy word; for the public instructions of thy sanctuary; for the gift of thine adorable Son; for his pure and undefiled religion; for the sublime truths he inculcated; for his excellent precepts; for his faultless examples; and for the compassionate spirit which he breathed around him, wherever he went, and which his religion still imparts to all who feel its power, and submit to its dominion. And now, O Lord, may thy kingdom come, and thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven; and to thy name shall be the praise and the glory forever. Amen.

NO. II.

INFINITELY wise and holy Father of the spirits of all flesh: we desire to draw near unto thee, with hearts filled with a deep sense of our dependence upon thee, and to put up to thee a morning sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, which shall be acceptable in thy holy sight. In addressing thee as our Father, may we realize thy parental character, and rejoice in the assurance that thou wilt watch over us for good; that thou wilt be our Protector and our Shield, and wilt grant a full supply for all our natural wants. Help us, we pray thee, to feel our near relationship to thee, and to understand that as children of thy

love, we owe thee that reverence, affection and obedience, which are due to the wisest and best of Parents. We thank thee that thou hast watched over us during the darkness and helplessness of the past night, and allowed the light of another morning to dawn upon us.

Enable us, O God, this day to keep thy commandments, and to walk in thy precepts. Preserve us from every temptation that may assail us, and every evil that may beset us. Keep our feet in the paths of wisdom and righteousness, and assist us, we beseech thee, to put into practice, so far as in us lies, the divine precept of the dear Redeemer—"Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." Do thou forbid that we should desecrate to unholy purposes any of the powers thou hast graciously bestowed upon us; but, studying to be wise, may we strive to devote every faculty of body and mind to such purposes as thou didst design, in endowing us with them, that we may reap all the good they are capable of imparting to us. Give us this day our daily bread, and bless us, not only with the food which supports the body, but we pray, especially, that thou wouldst feed our souls with that spiritual food which imparts life, and strength, and holiness to the inner man. Prepare us, not only for what awaits us this day, but for whatever may befall us through all our lives. Strengthen us in hours of weakness—console us in moments of despondency—be with us and bless us in every event—and finally receive us to thyelf, through Jesus, the Saviour of the world. Amen.

EVENING PRAYER.

O THOU, who art the God of the morning and of the evening—who causest the light of the day to shine, and the shades of night to gather around us! we desire to worship thee as our Guardian and Protector, both amid the light of the sun, and during the darkness of the night—as the only being who art infinitely able to extend over us that protecting shield, which shall save us from evil and destruction. We would most devoutly thank thee, that thou hast been with us throughout this day—that thou hast sustained and blessed us, not only in our moments of enjoyment, but in our labor and toil, and hast smiled upon us in the busy mart of the world, and in the retirement of domestic life. We thank thee that thou hast strengthened and saved us in the hour of temptation, and hast not permitted us to fall into any deep and grievous sin—that thou hast bestowed upon us that degree of health and strength by which we have been enabled to sustain our lot through the day—and hast once more brought us to the hour of rest, amid many mercies. Help us, heavenly Parent, to be truly grateful for all these thy favors, and to make thee such returns of praise and thankfulness, as shall be acceptable in thy holy sight.

We pray thee, O God, to enable us to review the transactions in which we have been engaged during the day which has now passed away, and to acknowledge unto thee wherein we have done amiss. May we be able to discover the faults and imperfections of which we may have been guilty—the sins of commission and omission

which may justly be laid to our charge—and may the retrospect have a tendency to make us more watchful and careful hereafter. We praise thee, God of all goodness, that thou hast this day amply supplied us with food, and raiment, and shelter, and hast given unto us everything essential to our welfare and happiness. O, may we ever hold thee in grateful remembrance, for thy multiplied and constantly returning acts of blessedness and love. May we strive to live more acceptably to that Being, who thus binds us to himself by unfailing streams of grace.

Wilt thou be pleased, Almighty Father, to watch over us during the night which has now enfolded us in its darkness. May the eye that never slumbers, look down approvingly upon us. Preserve us, we implore thee, from every danger and every evil, while we lie in helplessness before thee. May our meditations of thee, of heaven and heavenly things, in the watches of the night, be sweet and peaceful to our souls, and may our sleep be refreshing, and give our bodies renewed strength and vigor. Allow us, if it please thee, to behold the rising of another morning's sun, and be prepared to engage in the avocations of the day. And may the ever returning light of the natural sun remind us of the sun of thy impartial love, which never sets, nor declines to the horizon, but which beams with meridian and unclouded splendor upon the universe which thou hast formed. These blessings we implore in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, through whom we would ascribe unto thee thanksgiving, honor, and glory, now and evermore. Amen.

SATURDAY EVENING.

HOLY Father in heaven; thou who art the God of the morning and of the evening, and to whom we are indebted for life and all its blessings; we bow reverently in thy presence at this time, and lift our thoughts in gratitude to thee, for the preservation of our lives through another day, and for the testimonials of thy love with which we have been surrounded.

We thank thee that health and friends are granted to us, and that we can still hope and trust in thy mercy. We praise thy glorious name for the numerous blessings and comforts of the past week, and we devoutly thank thee, O God, that we are permitted at its close to come around the family altar, and call upon thee as our Father who art in heaven—that we can present our supplications unto thee with the assurance that thou art a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God. To thee are we indebted for the strength we have had to perform our duties; for the health we have enjoyed; for the prosperity that has attended our efforts. Thy mercies have been new every morning and fresh every evening. Thou hast guarded our dwelling from danger, and permitted us to live in security and peace.

We acknowledge with grateful hearts our dependence upon thee for all we possess, and for all that we hope to enjoy in time, or eternity; and we rejoice that thou hast given us the assurance of thy continued love and protection.

We humbly ask thy blessing to rest upon us as a family, and as individuals. Give us a realizing sense of thy love to us, and of our own duty

to thee, to each other, and to our fellow-mortals. Forgive, we pray thee, our past sins and transgressions. Pardon every unholy word we may have spoken during the past week, and grant that we may enter upon another week with pure hearts, and holy resolutions, and be enabled henceforth to live in love to thee, to each other, and all men.

Wilt thou watch over us through this night, and cause us to awake on the morrow with health, strength, and a disposition to do thy holy will. O may we keep the Sabbath day holy, so as to honor thy name and improve our own hearts. Give us wisdom to direct our feet in the way of righteousness and peace. May thy Spirit enlighten our mind, warm and purify our hearts. May it lead us to forgive our enemies, and to overcome evil with good. Deliver us, O God, from evil and temptation of every kind—lead us in the way of duty, and grant us an abundance of thy grace, that we may live in thy fear, die in the triumphs of faith, and be raised at last to everlasting glory. And the praise shall be thine forever and ever. Amen.

PART FOURTH.

CONTAINING REFLECTIONS AND PRAYERS SUITABLE FOR VARIOUS OCCASIONS.

THANKSGIVING.

REFLECTIONS adapted to Ps. xxxvi. Ps. xcii. Ps. c. Ps. cvii.—How various and how great are the blessings of God! The human mind can neither conceive their number, nor estimate their worth. All the Divine arrangements are made with reference to the good of man. This is true both in the natural and moral world.

Look at man. The structure of his whole physical frame bears the impress of goodness. All his limbs and senses and powers are designed for his good; not one is given to render him miserable. All his intellectual and moral faculties are of the same character. When rightly used they afford the most pleasurable emotions, and tend to his exaltation and happiness.

Look at inanimate nature. In all its arrangements there is an exact adaptation to man. How perfectly is the fluid by which we are surrounded, suited to the ear, the voice, the lungs, and the eye. The productions of the earth are exactly fitted for the sustenance of the body. Night is adapted to the repose which we need, and day to active exertion.

How truly, then, can we say, "the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." For us the sun shines and the earth yields her bounty; for us the rains fall and the dews descend; for us the world rolls on its axis, and the seasons change; for us the flower blooms and

sends forth its delicious fragrance; for us the heavens and the earth are made beautiful, the soft zephyrs float on the supporting air, and music pours forth its enrapturing strains. Every arrangement in animate and inanimate nature is for us. What reasons for thanksgiving!

If we turn to the scheme of grace, we have even brighter and more glorious manifestations of goodness. Here heaven-instructed teachers are sent to call us away from sin, and lead us in the way of peace. Even Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, dies, that faith may shed its golden light upon our path; hope cheer us in the hour of sorrow; love warm and animate our hearts, and an inheritance, of more value than countless worlds, be our portion forever! Ten thousand thanks are due for such distinguished favors.

How proper, then, that one day in each returning year should be set apart for meditation upon the causes of thanksgiving. Valuable, inexpressibly valuable is such meditation. O how does it gladden our hearts and strengthen our hopes. Let us, then, devote the day to devout meditation; let us remember the mercies and celebrate the praises of our God.

PRAYER FOR A THANKSGIVING DAY.

Incomprehensible, Great, Good, and Wise Jehovah! we desire to thank thee for all thy mercies, and would bring our offering to thee at all times. But more especially on this day, set apart by our government for a season of special thanksgiving and praise, would we endeavor to lift unto thee the voice of gratitude, and talk of all thy wondrous works. We adore thee, God Almighty, for the preservation of our lives,—for the health of our bodies,—for the joy of our spirits,—for all the

good gifts scattered so thickly in our paths. And, O thou Good Supreme, we do most fervently thank thee for the continuance of our lives through the year that has now passed, in circumstances of so much mercy, and that we are brought to behold the dawn of this day hallowed in the memories of the past. We thank thee for the piety of our fathers, which led them to establish this pleasing institution. May we now partake of their right spirit, and of their pious gratitude. With full emotions of heart we would now confess thy bounty, and pour unto thee our tribute of praise. Thou hast appointed the sun in the heavens for seasons, and maketh it shine upon all —both the evil and the good, the just and the unjust. Thou hast never left thyself without a witness, in that thou hast done good; giving us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our mouths with food, and our hearts with gladness. Thou openest thine hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season. What shall we render unto thee, O Lord, for all thy benefits? O give thanks to him —give *thanks* to him; for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever. O give thanks unto the God of heaven, for his mercy endureth forever.

Abundant occasion have we this day to utter the memory of thy great goodness, and to praise thee for thy works' sake. For thou hast indeed been kind to us,—thou hast remembered us when we have forgotten thee. All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee. We thank thee for the ingathering of another harvest,—for the plenteousness of all the

fruits of the earth,—for seed to the sower and bread to the eater. By the influence of thy good providence, the valleys have been covered with corn, and the little hills have rejoiced on every side.

We would also praise thee, O Lord, for the continuance of thy *spiritual* blessings. We thank thee for thy Gospel's sway, and for its increase among men. We thank thee for the diminishing of error, and for the true light that hath shined. We thank thee, also, for the continuance of civil liberty, and its blessings;—for schools, and all institutions of learning. Smile upon them, O God, we beseech thee, and grant that we may long continue a people blessed and approved of thee.

We would remember particularly, this day, the rulers of our states and country, and all those placed in authority over us. Bless, we beseech thee, the chief magistrate of this great republic. Give him a high sense of the responsibilities of his office, and grant that the principles of his administration may be equity and righteousness, Bless the governor of this state, and of these confederated states, and all in subordinate authority. May they be men who fear thee and who hate iniquity; and long may we live, a nation, great, powerful, and prosperous,—that feareth thee and frameth wise counsels. Preserve us, we beseech thee, from foreign broils and intestine commotions, and may no weapon, formed against us, be suffered by thy hands to prosper.

Regard us, O Lord, in our family concerns for the coming year,—and grant a continuance of thy bounty to all this land. And, when all our years

are ended, admit us to a nobler world than this, where the songs of thanksgiving eternally ascend, and the anthems of glory eternally roll; and to thee, through Jesus Christ, be glory forever and ever. Amen.

CHRISTMAS.

REFLECTIONS adapted to Isa. ix. Isa. xxxv. Isa. xlii. Luke ii. 1—32.—How humble, and yet how honored was the birth of Christ! Instead of being a descendant from one of the royal families, and being ushered into the world amid the pomp and splendor of wealth, he was of lowly parentage and cradled in a manger. But though his birth was thus obscure, no event was ever so honored of God. An angel from heaven, encircled with the divine glory, announced it to the wondering shepherds of Judea; a multitude of angels celebrated it with an anthem of praise; and even a star appeared in the heavens, to guide the wise men of the east to the humble home of the infant King! What celestial pomp! what acclamations of joy! what wonderful displays of divine glory and power!

And how fitting that the Saviour's birth should be thus honored! It was the commencement of a new era; the ushering in of a new dispensation; the signal for the overthrow of the kingdom of darkness, and for the universal triumph of truth and peace. It was an event that was to change the whole aspect of the moral world. Jesus was not born for one nation, but for all nations; he was King of kings, and Lord of lords. How many millions has he guided in the paths of holiness; in how many dwellings has he kindled the light of peace; to how many saddened hearts has he given hope. Well may he be called the Sun of righteousness; the King of glory; the mighty God; the Friend of the poor; and the Saviour of the lost. What are

all the kings and conquerors and benefactors of the world, in comparison with him! He is above all; the guide of all; the hope of all; and when his mission shall have been accomplished, light and life shall bless all nations, languages and tongues.

Let us, then, ever with glad hearts celebrate his nativity, and seek to honor him in our daily walk and conversation. Let us reverence him, for he is our Master; keep his law, for he is our Judge; love him, for he is our Redeemer.

PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS.

O THOU, who art glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders!—on this day, set apart for the commemoration of the birth of him who is our Lord, Master, Saviour, and Redeemer, do thou, we beseech thee, fill us with reverent emotions, and let us rejoice and be glad in the knowledge of our salvation. O enable us to see thy infinite love and mercy manifested in the gift of thy well-beloved Son. When dead in sin, thou didst pity and provide for our redemption. Revive the recollections of thy prophecies, and thus awaken our hearts to see the greatness of thy goodness. Thou hast performed the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers, from the days of old. Thou hast given us the promised Shiloh. Thou hast blessed Israel, and redeemed the Gentiles—thy light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon us. Unto us, O Lord, a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and do thou help us to perceive in him the great Prophet, Priest, and

King. Strengthen our faith, and make us perfectly established.

And, O thou, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we pray thee to enlighten us in all his teachings. We thank thee for the knowledge which he gave us of thyself, and would perceive in him more and more of thy divine image. We thank thee for the precepts which he gave us for the regulation of our moral conduct, and would imbibe more and more of their spirit, and practise a better obedience to them. We thank thee for his bright and heavenly example, and would copy more faithfully after it. We thank thee for all the means, through him, of salvation from sin, ignorance, and sorrow, and would thereby become more perfectly saved, sanctified, and blest.

But more especially, O God, we thank thee for the great deliverance from the fear of death. We bless thy holy name, that now we need be no longer subject to this bondage; for he—the Prince of life, came, suffered, died, and was buried, and on the third day rose again, according to the Scriptures, bringing life and immortality to light. O receive our gratitude for this unspeakable gift. Thou, Lord, didst not create us for shame and ruin. Blessed be thy great and holy name, that we were born for a nobler destiny—that we were framed to expatiate through another and a more glorious life—that thou hast begotten us unto a *lively* hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.

For all these blessings, secured to us in Christ Jesus, we present to thee, this day, the sincere

offerings of our hearts. And we thank thee, also, for the influences of Christianity through all the civilized world;—for the progress of light, virtue, and civilization, wherever it has gone;—for its amelioration of humanity—for its blessings to the poor, the prisoner, the enslaved, the unfortunate of every clime—and for all the benevolent institutions to which it has given rise. We thank thee for its influence in social and political life—for its aid in the formation of wise counsels, and the promotion of just governments among men. God Almighty grant that its power may more and more continue to be felt, till the whole earth shall be christianized and the whole race exalted.

And when, at last, all the good purposes of thy grace shall have been accomplished on the earth, may there be administered unto us and all thy redeemed, an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom, where he, whom we this day celebrate, shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied—where God shall be honored, and Christ glorified, and songs of eternal gratitude, arising from all the hosts of heaven, shall go up forever and ever. Amen.

FASTING.

Reflections adapted to Isa. lviii. Matt. vi. 16—34. Mark ii. 15—28.—Fasting has been practised among all nations, in times of mourning, sorrow and affliction. The custom commenced in the time of Moses. He fasted forty days, on Mount Horeb. Since his time fasting has been very common among the Jews. Joshua

and the elders of Israel remained prostrate before the ark, from morning till evening, without eating, after Israel was defeated at Ai. The eleven tribes, which fought against that of Benjamin, fell down on their faces before the ark, and so continued till evening without eating. David fasted while his child was sick. The solemn fast of expiation was held once a year, and very faithfully kept by all the Jews. Fasting has also been common among the Christians. According to Dr. Neander, the early Christians were accustomed to devote many separate days entirely to examining their own hearts. No appointed days for fasting are mentioned in the New Testament.

The Jews entertained very erroneous opinions in regard to fasting. They thought a man should afflict his soul, bow down his head as a bulrush, and spread sackcloth and ashes under him. But God has declared that such fasting was not acceptable. The Saviour also condemned it in the strongest terms. And well they might; for what advantage can there be in disfiguring the face, afflicting the body, and making our condition as uncomfortable as possible?

The prophet mentions three things in acceptable fasting: 1. Loosing the bonds of wickedness. 2. Undoing heavy burdens. 3. Feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. It is of no avail to abstain from food, unless our abstinence wakes up a sympathy for those who are oppressed and needy. And alas! how many there are who need the purest sympathies of the Christian. They are in bondage, and sigh for freedom; they are poor, and cry for bread; they are discouraged, and need aid. Think of them when fasting, and resolve to do them good.

Again. Fasting affords an opportunity to review our sins. And how many are there of these? What a long list stands against every man? O let us humble ourselves before God; let us appear not unto men to fast, but unto God, that he may bless us. Let us examine our hearts, and beseech the Divine forgiveness. Then shall we fast acceptably to the Lord.

PRAYER.

O God of mercy, we humbly implore thee to have compassion upon thy sinful children here in thy presence, and enable them to feel their great unworthiness. Thou, O Lord, lovest righteousness and hatest iniquity; to thee belong grace and forgiveness; thou hast opened a fountain for Judah and Jerusalem, in which all can purify their hearts. Thanks to thy blessed name for favors so great to those so unworthy. Though we have forgotten thee, thou hast been mindful of us; though we have trampled upon thy law, thou hast not smitten us with judgment; though we have abused thy favors, thou hast abundantly supplied all our wants; though we have disregarded the oppressions of our fellow-beings, thou hast protected and blessed us.

O thou supreme Ruler of heaven and earth, we praise thee for the liberty we enjoy; that we can worship thee according to the dictates of our own consciences; and that we are surrounded by so many wise and excellent institutions. But we lament that we have made such poor returns for thy many kindnesses; that we have done no more for the efficiency of the excellent government under which we live; that we have improved no better the various opportunities we have had for growing in wisdom and grace. We lament, O God, the many evils which are spread over the face of the earth; that licentiousness stalks abroad at noon-day; that fraud and deception are so generally practised; that so many are oppressed by unrighteous laws; that thousands live in want, while the earth is full of thy riches.

O God, correct, we beseech thee, the errors of the world. Awaken all to a sense of their sins; exterminate pride and injustice from all souls, and may all unite with one heart in promoting the cause of peace, and the general interests of thy moral kingdom. Wilt thou enlighten those who sit in darkness; restrain those engaged in war; bring violence and strife to an end; and cause truth to spread from sea to sea.

Regard, O Lord, all in authority. May the President of the Union fear thee and hate sin; may he have wisdom to discern and firmness to seek the true interests of his people. Bless, O God, the Governor of this State, and grant that he may be clothed with righteousness and equity; rule in justice and judgment, and seek uniformly the good of all his people. Grant the same blessings to all appointed to make and execute laws. May they realize their responsibility, and be faithful to their trust. Upon our whole country let thy blessing rest; and may all remember that righteousness exalts a nation, but that sin is a reproach to any people.

Be our guardian, O God, through this year; may it be spent in thy service. Save us from famine, pestilence, war and death, and keep us from all evil. And finally receive us to thyself, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

REFLECTIONS adapted to Ps. xc. Ps. cxlv. Eccle. i. —How many are the lessons of this day! It teaches that this is a world of change. Many who entered

with us upon the present year, full of hope, and dreaming only of long life, have gone to the peaceful slumbers of the grave! The aged and the young, the rich and the poor, have gone! Some lingered on beds of pain, some were called suddenly and unexpectedly. Some were found in readiness, and some trembled to hear their summons!

Again; this day teaches us the rapidity of time. How short does the period seem since the beginning of this year! As we stood upon its threshold, and looked forward to its close, the time appeared long; but hours, days, weeks have glided swiftly away, and soon the night winds will sing their solemn requiem over its departure. We spend our years as a tale that is told.

Again; this day teaches the value of a year. Though short, how much have the faithful and good accomplished. They have gained in knowledge; they have grown in grace; they have taught the young to fear the Lord; they have reclaimed wanderers, enlightened the ignorant, and extended the kingdom of Christ; they have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, broken the chain of oppression, comforted the mourner, and taught the dying to hope in heaven. O what a labor is this! How vast a work; and how short the period in which it has been accomplished! How much good, then, can be done in a year! How much evil, too, can be done in a year Alas! how many, during the past year, have squandered their fortunes; formed vicious habits; destroyed their hopes, and ruined the peace of their families!

Again; this day teaches us to be moderate in our expectations for the year to come. Before its close, how many calamities may come upon us; how many changes may we experience. Our property may be swept away; our prosperity be succeeded by adversity; our dearest friends be cut down; our health impaired, our existence terminated. Let us boast not of to-morrow, for we know not what it may bring forth; but let us trust in him whose years fail not, and who, amid all the changes of earth, remains eternally the same.

PRAYER.

GREAT Source of life, light and happiness! the Protector and Guide of all men; standing as we do on the confines of the departing year, and feeling our entire dependence upon thee, we desire to acknowledge thy mercy and compassion, and to implore a continuance of thy favors. We praise thee, O God, that thou hast been our shield and support, and our unfailing source of comfort. Every day have we been supplied from the storehouse of thy bounty; and every day have we walked in thy sun-light, and enjoyed the smiles of thy countenance. Thou hast given us health and strength; thou hast healed our diseases, and cheered us with hope in all our sorrows. Thy mercies have gladdened our dwellings, and thy care defended them from the hand of the spoiler; and, though we have tasted the cup of bitterness, we feel that our blessings have been far more numerous than our trials.

O Lord, we give thee thanks that we are still numbered with the living, and that, while so many of our fellow-beings have been called away during the year, we are still spared, and are surrounded by thy mercies. Forbid, great God, that the health and vigor thou hast given us, should awaken within us a vain confidence, or lead us to feel that we are sufficient in our own strength. Impress us with a deep sense of the uncertainty of all things temporal, and of our liability to be called away at any moment.

[This to be used if any of the family have been taken away by death.]

[Eternal Father, may the trials we have been called to experience give us humility and trust,

and guard us against relying on an arm of flesh. O Lord, in thy wisdom and mercy, thou hast caused the angel of death to walk in our midst, and cut down one [two] of our number. The voice [voices] of kindness which so often gladdened our hearts is [are] silent; the loved is [are] gone forever from our society, and the [their] smile of affection no longer beams upon us. O give us submission and hope, and enable us to make a wise improvement of all our afflictions.]

Heavenly Father, we commit ourselves to thy care, and pray that we may dedicate our lives to thy service; and, during the coming year, may we be more thankful to thee; more mindful of thy laws; more attentive to our duties. Help us so to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom; that we may serve thee better than in the year past; and that, instead of being cold and negligent, we may be zealous and faithful.

Everliving God, may not the thought that we are mortal, and that we are rapidly hastening to the grave, discourage our hearts. May we be cheered by the reflection, that though life is like the early dew and tender flower, thy years have no end, and thou ever livest to guard and bless thy children. O may we trust in thee, hearken to thy counsels, and look forward by faith to that world, where days and years are unknown; and the praise shall be thine forever. Amen.

THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR.

REFLECTIONS adapted to Psalm cii. Job x. Eccle. iii.—"A happy New-Year," is the cheerful salutation with which thousands and thousands will this day be

greeted. But all such wishes are vain, unless we seek to make the year happy by living in obedience to God. Those who would have this year happier than the last, must be more holy. If spent in sin, it will be a year of darkness and sorrow; if devoted to the evil indulgences which have hitherto cursed us, misery will continue to be our portion. No power in heaven or on earth is capable of giving happiness to any human being unless he will renounce sin. Let us, then, begin the year by forming new resolutions; by correcting our bad habits; by dedicating ourselves anew to the service of God. Let us inquire in what ways we can be more useful to each other; to those around us, and to the cause of religion. Let us avoid a repetition of the errors into which we have fallen, and gather wisdom from the experience of the past. By so doing, we shall advance in knowledge as we advance in years; and be prepared for whatever God may ordain.

PRAYER.

O THOU, who art from everlasting to everlasting, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; we, thy feeble and dependent children, would come into thy presence as humble suppliants, and beseech thee to lift upon us the light of thy countenance. We give thanks to thy name, that we are spared to behold the light of this morning, and under circumstances so favorable, to assemble around this altar. Prepare us, O God, for all the duties of the year upon which we have entered. May we be guarded against sickness, calamity and death; may we be led by thy hand in the paths of wisdom, and beside the still waters of mercy. Enable us to feel that our way will be dark and wretched, unless we follow thy direc-

tions; that peace cannot be the portion of any who live in sin. With the new-year, help us, O God, to begin a new life; may we cease from the unfruitful works of darkness; may we put on the new man; be created anew in the likeness of Jesus Christ; be governed by new desires, and cheered by new hopes.

Teach us, O Lord, to realize the uncertainty attending all things earthly, and may we not look to riches, honor, or any worldly good, for permanent enjoyment. May we feel that all the sources of human happiness may fail; that all our earthly hopes may be destroyed, and that our joy may be turned into sorrow. Give us, O Father, give us the guidance of thy Spirit; inspire us with the hopes of the Gospel, and open to us those fountains of life which perpetually flow in all their fulness.

Supreme Guardian, if it shall please thee to spare us to the close of this year, may we be found in thy service, and be enabled to review it with satisfaction. Save us from idleness and folly; from irreligion and sin. Suffer us not to feel that we can walk without thy strength, or be sustained without thy promises. Forbid that unbelief should take possession of our hearts, or we be led to look with indifference upon the religion of Christ. In prosperity may we be grateful, and in adversity resigned; in health active; in sickness patient and submissive.

O Lord, watch over us during our whole lives; and grant, that whether our years be many or few, they may be spent in thy service; and unto thee, the King eternal, immortal and invisible,

shall be given all the praise forever and ever. Amen.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

REFLECTIONS adapted to Matt. xxvi. 17—29. Mark xiv. 1—26. 1 Cor. xi. 17—34.—The Communion is one of the wisest and most benevolent institutions of our blessed Saviour. Though it has been corrupted and perverted from its true design, it has, in almost all ages of the church, exerted a hallowing influence, and been an efficient aid in the cause of righteousness. Nothing could be so well suited to the end which it was given to accomplish. *This do in remembrance of me.* Now suppose he had stamped his effigy upon a coin, or erected a mausoleum, or constructed an immense temple, to perpetuate his memory, the object in view would not have been secured; for he did not wish merely to hand down his name to posterity; he wished to be remembered as a being of spotless purity; of unwearying benevolence, and as the one who gave himself a ransom for the world; and what could we learn of these from a coin, a mausoleum, or a temple? In the broken bread we have an emblem of his death; and in the wine an emblem of that blood which he shed for the remission of sins; and when we gather around the table to partake of these emblems, the mind is carried back to the time of the Saviour's ministry. We behold his untiring labors; his unaffected meekness; his love, which was stronger than death. We sit at the very foot of the cross, witness the insults of enraged priests, cruel soldiers, and an ignorant populace; gaze upon his bleeding feet and hands and side; listen to his words of comfort to the poor thief suffering with him, and hear him call upon the Father to forgive his murderers. Who can thus remember the Saviour, without having his affections elevated, and his heart filled with gratitude and love? Surely nothing could be so well

calculated to perpetuate his memory as the Communion. Besides, the emblems of the Saviour's death can be had in all churches, in all parts of the world, and thus at the same time influence all hearts. But had he depended upon some vast structure to keep his memory in the hearts of his followers, it would have been the occasion of painful pilgrimages, and could have influenced but a small portion of the church.

How thankful, then, should we be for this sacred institution! Let us not neglect it; for, how important that we should remember the Saviour; that we should commune with him, imbibe his spirit, and copy his example. If we forget him, we forget the only perfect pattern of righteousness ever given to the world; the only one whose religion can purify our hearts, and give us a firm hope in death. Go then to his table; go with grateful and believing hearts; go in love with all men; go in meekness and prayer; and he will meet you, and grant you his blessing.

PRAYER.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father; adored be thy name for the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ, for his sufferings upon the cross, for his resurrection and ascension, and for all the institutions of his religion. Especially do we thank thee that on the night when he was betrayed, he established, in remembrance of his death and passion, the holy Communion. Thanks be unto thee, O Lord, that thou hast preserved it amid all the changes and revolutions of the church; and that though, at different periods, it has been connected with degrading errors and superstitions, it still remains, and is now exerting that divine influence which

all thy institutions, when rightly understood, are calculated to have. We thank thee for all it has guided to the Saviour; for all it has done towards perpetuating his memory, impressing his truth upon the heart, and exhibiting to the world his great love and mercy. May its influence be felt in all succeeding ages; and may the time soon come when it shall be felt among all nations and languages.

May all who go to the table of our Master, go in humility and love; go not in their own strength, but in the strength of him who died for them, and go not to be seen of men, but to have their affections elevated, and their souls fed with the bread of life.

Be with those of us who are this day to eat and drink in memory of our dying Lord. Forbid that pride should be in our hearts; that we should have an unkind feeling towards one of our race. O may we be forgiving like our Lord; like him love our enemies, and seek to overcome evil with good.

Great God, make us watchful and prayerful; enable us to set a good example before the world, and may we avoid as much as possible the appearance of evil. When tempted, may we remember our Lord, and like him resist sin. May the charms and fascinations of the world have no power to wean our hearts from thee, or make us neglect our duties and despise thy name. Hear us, Father, and give us answers of mercy, and thy name, through Christ, shall have all the praise forever and ever. Amen.

FOR THE MORNING OF A COMMUNION SABBATH.

Holy Lord God of hosts, the Maker of heaven and earth, and the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to look down in mercy upon thy children, and accept their sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Heavenly Father, to thy goodness are we indebted for the preservation of our lives during the past week, and for the privilege of beholding the light of this blessed day. This is the Sabbath of our God; may we rejoice and be glad in it; and when we repair to the temple of worship, may it be to gain more wisdom, and to be rendered more holy. Make us humble and devout, and attentive to all the services of thy house. And, O Lord, when any of us assemble around the table of our gracious Master, may our minds be wholly withdrawn from the world, and be given entirely to meditation and prayer. Forbid that we should go to his table in a spirit of cold formality, and honor him merely with our lips. Forbid also that we should go with hearts estranged from thee, or affections chilled by the influence of the world. O kindle within us a flame of love. Let the Saviour's condescension and grace, his pity and compassion, subdue our hearts, and wake up the purest feelings of devotion.

Let thy blessing, O God, be upon the church with which some of us are connected. We rejoice in the assurance we have that it is built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being its chief corner-stone.

O Lord, may all the members be joined together in love; may they take sweet counsel together, and live in peace. With one heart may they pray and labor for the prosperity of truth, and with one voice sing thy worthy praise. Defend them from the unholy influence of error; keep them in the faith once delivered to the saints; and deliver them from all evil.

Increase, we beseech thee, their numbers. O may Zion be constantly enlarging her borders; and grant, gracious God, that all who may be received into fellowship with thy children, may be faithful, and worthy the confidence reposed in them, and live in accordance with the profession they make; and thy name, through Jesus Christ, shall have all the praise. Amen.

FOR A BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.

O Lord! thou art good unto all men; and thou art constantly manifesting thy goodness. Daily dost thou open thy hand to supply our wants. Thou art not only good, but abundant in goodness. Thou dost load our tables with plenty, and furnish us with all the means of temporal enjoyment. Thy goodness is also manifested in the scheme of redemption, in which provision is made for the salvation of a lost world. O Lord! enable us to realize thy goodness in sending thy Son to bring us back to thyself, and exalt us to heaven.

We bless thee, Father, for the religion he taught, exemplified in his life, and confirmed by

his death and resurrection. We rejoice in the instructions it imparts, the hopes it inspires, and the influences it exerts. And, at this time, we would thank thee for its philanthropic spirit; for the active benevolence it awakens in the heart, and the exertions to which it prompts for the aid of the poor and needy. We rejoice that it has an eye to weep over human woes, a heart to pity the unfortunate, and a hand to relieve distress; that its great office is to visit the widow and orphan in their affliction, and convert the home of wretchedness into an abode of joy. To this holy religion, we acknowledge ourselves indebted for the various charitable institutions with which the unfortunate are blessed,—institutions that have risen up in every part of our country, and that are supported with a commendable zeal and liberality. And, we pray, merciful Father, that the time may soon come when a religion so benign and holy may spread from sea to sea, feed every famishing son and daughter of humanity, and clothe every destitute orphan and widow, and watch at the couch of all sinking in poverty to the grave.

We pray, O Lord, for this Association. We give thee thanks for all the good it has done in relieving human suffering, and supplying human need. May it long stand as a monument of the divine nature of the Gospel, and of the active love it breathes into the soul. Smile, O God, upon all thy servants before thee. Give them that charity which never faileth. Bind them together by the strong cords of Christian affection, and grant that the union and fellowship of the Gospel may ever prevail among them. And when their labors

shall be ended on earth, admit them to the joys and honors of heaven, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FOR TEMPERANCE.

O THOU, who art the Giver of all our mercies, we would humble ourselves in thy presence, acknowledging the excellency of thy character, and the perfection of thy laws. Thou art wise and good, and in all thy dealings thou art seeking our happiness. But, O Lord, we have too often disregarded thy word, and followed the inclinations of our perverted appetites and passions. We lament our frequent departures from the ways of wisdom, and our manifold transgressions against thee. We lament, O Lord, the general prevalence of sin, and especially the sin of intemperance. We acknowledge that its blighting effects are felt in every part of our country; that it has overcome the youth in the brightness of their promise, the rich in their costly dwellings, and the poor in their dreary hovels. O God! how fearful are its ravages! It has dethroned reason, prostrated genius, defiled the heart, paralyzed the body, and caused those of every age, condition and pursuit, to go down to the grave in shame! Help us to realize the greatness of this sin; its power to destroy the enterprise of man, crush his ambition, divert his attention from the business of life, and drive him from his God.

O Lord! make bare thine arm, and stay the

dark waters that have come in upon us like a flood, sweeping away our fondest hopes, our dearest joys, our highest comforts. Roll them back, we beseech thee, from our midst, and cause the waters of temperance and salvation to gush forth on every hand.

We bless thee, heavenly Father, for all the efforts that have been made in the cause of temperance; that so many have enlisted as its public advocates, and that the people have so generally given it their support. We pray for thy blessing upon all well-directed efforts in this great cause. Crown the labors of thy servants with abundant success. Enable them to gain victory after victory, till the evil, over which we now mourn, shall be exterminated from the world. In this good cause, may all Christians unite, party names be forgotten, and all labor with a zeal which never tires. Keep each one of us from this sin. Enable us ever to abstain entirely from the use of that, which has been productive of so much evil and misery; and unto thee, through Jesus Christ, shall be given all the praise, forever and ever. Amen.

FOR FAMILIES IN AFFLICTION.

THE BENEFIT OF AFFLICTION.

REFLECTIONS adapted to Job xiv. Psalm xxvii. Psalm xc.—God does not afflict willingly. He is a merciful being, and visits his people with no sorrows which are not designed for a beneficial end. We are not always able to see the way in which afflictions are

useful. It is not possible that we should find out the Almighty to perfection, or be able to see the wisdom and goodness of all his arrangements. Why he should spare an idiotic child, and cut down one that is bright and promising; why call away a parent surrounded by a large family of helpless children, and leave an aged man to suffer after all his friends have gone to the grave, are among those dark and mysterious dealings which are wholly inexplicable even to the greatest minds. But while unable to fathom all the ways of God, we find no difficulty in discovering many advantages in affliction.

1. It calls attention directly to God. The afflicted see that he kills and makes alive; that he sways the sceptre of the world, and does all things after the counsel of his own will. But when health, peace and prosperity surround us, and everything moves on with its accustomed regularity, we forget God, and almost imagine ourselves immortal and self-existent. We neither realize the uncertainty of life, nor our dependence upon a divine arm. It is the office of affliction to awaken us from this perilous slumber. Counsels that are slighted in a season of general health, have an abiding influence when a sickly wind is hurrying its victims to the grave. Those who are vain and presumptuous in prosperity, are humble and teachable when crushed by calamities.

2. Affliction softens the heart. Many know nothing of sympathy for the distressed, till called to suffer. The rich have not that liberality towards the poor, which is common to persons who have experienced the trials of poverty. The healthy have not that compassion for the sick, which is felt by those who have suffered on beds of pain. The prosperous cannot commiserate with persons in adversity, as can those who have been buffetted by misfortune. Thus every new affliction awakens some new feeling in the heart, which responds to its kindred feeling.

3. Affliction shows the value of the Gospel. Those blessed with health, surrounded by friends, and living

in the midst of plenty, are strongly inclined to feel that the treasures of earth are sufficient—that they need nothing firmer than its hopes, or brighter than its prospects. They cling to the world till its charms cease to dazzle, its fairest works change, and its best promises fail. Not till overwhelmed by sorrow will they turn to the religion of Christ, lay hold upon its hopes, or listen to its teachings. Thousands, who have attended for years upon the services of the sanctuary, without being turned to God, have given him their hearts on a bed of sickness, in the house of mourning.

In view of these advantages, how truly can we say, *It is good for us to be afflicted.* The cloud which overshadows us, and renders our home desolate, is big with mercy; and every trial we experience will make us wiser and better, and work out for us an eternal weight of glory. Let us be meek and submissive, then, in the day of trouble, and remember that though God cause grief, yet will he have compassion.

[The above reflections can be used in connection with any of the following prayers, adapted to families in affliction.]

PRAYER FOR A FAMILY IN AFFLICTION.

O THOU, Father of mercies and God of all comfort, in thee we live, and move, and have our being. On thee we are dependent for all our good, and all our changes are controlled by thee. Thou art our God, our strength, and our Redeemer. And, specially humbled as we are at this time, under thy hand, we come to seek thy face, and to implore thy strengthening spirit. Give us, O God, to discern thy providence in all our afflictions, and to acknowledge thy righteous will. For, shall we receive good at the

hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil? Thou, alone, O God, art the Orderer of all things, and there is nothing good—there is nothing afflicting, but is under thy cognizance and disposal. Yet do thou impress us at all times with a becoming sense of thy goodness. Give us that knowledge, even in the depth of our afflictions. May it be the language of our hearts, that though clouds and darkness are sometimes round about thee, yet justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne; mercy and truth go continually before thee. We cry unto thee in sorrow, but we would endeavor to place unbounded confidence in God. Grant us, we beseech thee, that confidence,—grant us heavenly hope,—give us courage to face these evils which surround us,—give us faith, cheerfulness, resignation, fortitude and patience. May we not faint nor despair at this thy chastening, but look steadily to thee, be still, and know that thou art God, the sovereign and righteous Disposer of all things. There may our hearts rest—there may our souls find peace. May we stay ourselves on Israel's God.

[If the affliction be sickness, continue with the following.]

Thou hast indeed fearfully afflicted us. Thou hast caused health to depart from us—thou hast commanded disease to enter and prey upon our enjoyments. Lord God Almighty! if we have offended thee, forgive us. If the afflicted one hath transgressed thy laws, either in body or in mind, learn him [her] obedience to thy will, and dispense forgiveness to him [her]. Grant that he [she] may now so reflect upon his [her] ways,

and upon thy character, as that much profit may proceed from this affliction; and, O God, under this affliction of the body, may the mind be renewed and the heart sanctified. And do thou graciously be pleased to direct and bless the means for his [her] recovery. Give us wisdom to search out the causes of this malady, and, by the application of effectual remedies, to remove the disorder which afflicts him [her]. We confess ourselves subject to thine immutable laws. Humbled are we now before thee—humbled in the dust. O, suffer not our number to be diminished. Let not, as yet, the precious circle of this family be broken. Preserve our lives—restore speedily, and let us all have occasion to praise and thank thee for thy great deliverance. May the health of the other members of this family be precious in thy sight, and long let us live—a family blessed and approved of God, with that fear of the Lord which is health and peace unto the soul.

[If the affliction be death, omit the preceding paragraph, and use the following.]

O God! we acknowledge thy power—thine arm laid bare in the midst of us. We are bowed down with great heaviness, and sorrow and anguish of heart. Our domestic circle is broken, and one who was dear to us, and one of us, lies still and cold in death. O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer, we cry unto thee for help. Help us, thou God of mercy, to sustain ourselves under this trial. Suffer not our hearts to fail. Death is the appointed lot of all. Yet, under this severe visitation of it, we are made to sorrow; but do thou forbid that we sorrow as those who have

no hope. Grant unto us the hope of the gospel. Direct our minds to Christ, and to his resurrection. O may we now see, with clear spiritual vision, death vanquished, and the grave spoiled of its power. O death! let us exclaim, where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? And thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Sanctify, too, we pray thee, this breach to our spiritual improvement. May it be the means of loosening, more effectually, our hold from earth, and fastening, more intentively, our affections upon things above. May it teach us the uncertainty of life, and prepare us for our own departure. May it solemnize all our thoughts, and direct them, more habitually, to Christ, his cross, and his salvation—to him who was dead, but who liveth forever; who is our life and our triumph in this hour of darkness. And may we all submit to this providence with good hope through faith, till we all meet in the world where death comes not, where parting is no more, and where love is unchanging and immortal.

[If the affliction be any other than sickness or death, omit the two former paragraphs, and use the following.]

Lord God of heaven and earth; thine it is to give peace, and to crown us with prosperity—both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might. Now, therefore, as our lot on earth seemeth to be trying, our earthly comforts to depart from us, and our prosperity to diminish, to thee, O God, do we look. Thou only art all-sufficient—in thee is infinite fulness—thou

art the infinite source of all bounty and of all good. Create, then, we beseech thee, light and favor for us at this time. Disperse the clouds of darkness which seem to be gathering over us, and let us receive the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. We are satisfied that thou art good, and that thou doest only good—that although many dispensations of thy providence may appear dark and inscrutable to our short-sighted understandings, yet thou, O God, ever hast in view some wise and benevolent design. Sanctify, then, this providence, under which we now groan and are burdened, to the good of all of us, and all those who are in any way specially interested; and let us henceforth have occasion to glorify thy name, and tell, with joy, of all thy wondrous works.

[Whatever may be the affliction, close the prayer with the following.]

Unto thee, O God, would we now present our petitions, and leave them at thy throne. Thou art the hearer and the answerer of prayer. Thou wilt not, and thou dost not, afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men. And let *this* affliction work out for us the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and prepare us all still better for the journey of life and for all its coming changes. Whatever those changes may be—whether prosperity or adversity, or life or death, let us resign ourselves to thy merciful disposal, being fully persuaded that none of them shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. And after life and all its toils are over, receive us to that world where the evils of this

cannot follow us—where the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick—where death comes not—where sorrowing and sighing shall be no more, and tears shall be wiped from all faces. We ask it humbly, yet fervently and with faith, through Jesus Christ our Lord and our Redeemer. Amen.

FOR A FAMILY VISITED WITH DEATH.

O THOU, whose smile fills our hearts with joy, and whose frown darkens them with sorrow; unto thee would we come in our affliction; for thou art our only Hope, Refuge, and Support. Thy ways, O Lord, are mysterious; thy path is in the great waters, and thy footsteps are in the mighty deep; thou hast severed the tenderest ties of our hearts, and overwhelmed us with the dark waters of affliction.

It hath pleased thee, in the infinity of thy wisdom and goodness, to enter our family circle, and take away, by death, one of our number. Great God, darkness has gathered around our home; our souls are bowed with anguish; and even the fair face of nature wears to us a look of gloom. O give us, we beseech thee, that support which we need; and while we reflect, that we shall no longer take sweet counsel with our departed friend, may we be comforted by the hope that we shall meet again where neither death nor parting shall be known. Parent of mercy! encircle us in the arms of thy love, and lead us from the darkness which overshadows us, to the light in which thou dwellest. May we not yield ourselves to

despondency, or be hardened by the affliction thou hast ordained; but may we feel that all events are ordered for the best, and open our hearts to the holy influences of thy Spirit.

Gracious Father! we bless thee that we are not left to mourn as those who have no hope; that light has beamed upon us from thy countenance, and that though all flesh is as grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field, thy Word, with its cheering hopes and blessed promises, remains forever and ever. O may we listen to its instructions, and be comforted by the prospects which it discloses; may we be sustained by the assurance it gives of thy perpetual care, and thy eternal love; that thy providence is always around thy people; and that though they leave this world, thou art still with them to protect and bless. By this sacred Word may our hearts be now comforted; may its holiest consolations be ours, that we may be calm, tranquil, and resigned, and look through all the clouds which overshadow us, up to that bright world, where sorrow shall never come, but all be life and peace.

[If a parent has died, the following.]

Father of love! as we shall no longer have the guidance, instruction and support of the parent thou hast taken away, may we realize that we have an infinite Parent in heaven. And as we shall no longer hear the voice of our earthly parent, may we listen to thy words of wisdom, and be guided in the paths of peace. Help us to imitate all the good examples of him [her] whose loss we deplore. Make us thankful for all the

care he [she] exerted over us, and may we treasure up in our hearts all his [her] virtues.

[If a husband or wife has died, the following.]

O God, as thou hast taken away the chosen partner of my life, the object of my most affectionate regard, the one who shared with me in the labors and anxieties of this mortal state, bestow upon me those blessings which I need; *grant that I may have wisdom rightly to govern these children now solely entrusted to my care;* grant also that I may enjoy thy presence, and feel that thou art ever with me, my constant Helper and Support. May I find friends to assist me in my deserted condition, and comfort me in my loneliness.

[If a brother or sister has died, the following.]

O righteous Lord! as thou hast taken away one with whom we have spent many happy hours, and who shared with us the joys of early life, we pray for submission to thine appointment. Give us composure of spirit, that we may be enabled to bear up under this great trial. And while we realize that the tenderest ties of earth have no power to save from death, may we rejoice to know that death will finally be destroyed, and the friends we have lost will at last be restored to our embrace.

[Close the prayer with the following.]

Heavenly Father! prepare us for all the trials of life, and enable us to submit with composure to all thy appointments. Prepare us also for death, and when the time of our departure shall

come, may we be blessed with a strong faith and a calm spirit, and at last be received to thyself, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

DEATH OF A CHILD.

FATHER in heaven, we would own the justice of thy dealings, and bow in resignation to thy holy will. Death has entered our dwelling and made a sad breach in our circle, and a deep void in our affections, by the removal of one we fondly loved. And while we feel, within, the grief and desolation this thy providence hath wrought, wilt thou, O Father, teach us to be calm. Enable us to realize that the tender lamb thou hast taken from our bosoms, now rests from pain and suffering in the bosom of a Saviour's love. Remembering that the Saviour, when on earth, loved little ones like ours, and called them to himself, and took them in his arms, and blessed them, may we feel that our departed child has heard his kind, inviting voice, and left our arms for his; and may this thought console us.

O wilt thou still the swelling tide of anguish in our bosoms, and sanctify to us this sad bereavement and every dispensation of thy wisdom. Shed over our wounded spirits thy healing balm of love. May our affliction awaken in our minds a livelier sense of the beauty and value of thy Gospel, and raise our aspirations heavenward, and disengage our affections from the things of time. May we, who survive our loved one, more fully learn thy love. Thou hast taken from us one of

our dearest treasures, up to thine abode of purity and blessedness, and there may our hearts be also. Keep us while we sojourn here, and when thou shalt call us hence, wilt thou gather us, with those we have loved and lost in time, to praise thy name in glory, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

AFTER THE LOSS OF A YOUNG CHILD.

EVER-LIVING and most merciful God; wilt thou deign to smile compassionately upon this family, in the present season of deep affliction and sorrow. We are in a world of want, and uncertainty, and change. Very often does it become to us a vale of tears. Its possessions are momentary, its enjoyments unstable. The tenderest ties which bind us to each other are soon dissolved, and even our most endeared comforts removed from our embrace. The fairest flowers of our homes bloom but for a few brief days, and then infold their beauties and their charms, and wither in the very hand that is striving to preserve them in their freshness. Age and infancy are promiscuously cut down by the scythe of death. From its fatal stroke no one is exempt. All that live must die.

But, Lord, we would indulge no murmur; we would utter no complaint. We believe that what thou doest is best; and that, though many of the dispensations of thy providence are, for the time being, severe and painful, they will all result in our good. Thou hast permitted disease and

death to enter this house, and to remove from thy servants a lovely and fondly-cherished child, a young and tender creature, but still the pride, and hope, and joy of its parents and of all the members of the family. The sun of its life has gone down very early in the morning of its existence. Thy servants, O Lord, deeply, and it is hoped submissively, mourn their loss. Their hearts are sorely pained. Their tears flow copiously, and no hand but thine can wipe them away, and dry up the fountain whence they come. Gloom is in their dwelling; and as they move through its apartments, they feel lonely and desolate. One that was wont to enliven and impart a charm to their home is no longer one of their number. They listen, but hear not the music of its infant voice. They look, but its lovely and beautiful form meets not the eye. They find only trouble and sorrow, where, but a little time since, all was cheerfulness, and hope, and joy.

But, O our God, wilt thou deign to be with thy servants, and sustain them, and soothe the anguish awakened within them by this painful bereavement. Forbid that they should sorrow as those that have no hope. May they trust in thee, and in thy holy child Jesus, the great Comforter of all that mourn. Help them, O Lord, to remember the blessed language which fell from the lips of their Master, during his mission on earth. "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." O help them to make these balmy and soothing words their own; and may they not forget that he who uttered them is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever. May the assurance be

awakened within them, that the spirit of their loved and lamented child has only been removed from earth to heaven, where it will be watched by thine own eye, and reared to maturity under the culture of thine own good spirit. May they, therefore, cheerfully give it up to thee; confidingly resign it to thy fatherly protection and mercy.

And now wilt thou impart, O our Father and our God, a serene frame of mind to these thy sorrowing children. Keep them in thy love and thy peace while they live; give them resignation and hope in death; and eventually receive them, and all men, to the enjoyment of thyself, and of thy great salvation, in realms of immortal blessedness. Amen.

FOR A SICK PERSON.

Almighty and most merciful God! who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and who hast not thought even a crown of everlasting life too much to promise to thy children! I desire humbly to own and reverence thy hand in my present sickness. All the causes which can operate upon me are, in thy hand, as the ministers of thy pleasure. I repose entire confidence in thy wisdom. May my bodily suffering bring good to my soul, and lead me more justly to value health and strength, and to employ them to nobler purposes than I have done, if this sickness shall not be unto death. Let me take that view of life, from my sick bed, which can be taken from no other place. With

submission to thy will, I pray for the removal of my disorder, and for the perfect restoration of my health. Thy will, O God, and not mine, be done. Endue me with resignation, patience, and meekness, under the pains of disease and the irksomeness of confinement. Above all, prepare me for death.

O may I at this time, whatever the issue of this sickness may be, fix my heart steadfastly upon thee, and have a lively faith in that blessed Saviour, who led the way through the grave to the immortality beyond it. Through the wilderness of this world let me ever bless thee for the manna and the rock. On the brink of Jordan let thy promises be precious. In the last hour let my faith in a Redeemer be strong, and grant me to ascend into thy blissful presence in the chariot of love and praise. O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! Be my God in life, my hope in death, and my everlasting portion, through Jesus my Saviour. Amen.

FOR A CHILD DANGEROUSLY ILL.

With anxious and sorrowing hearts, we bear before thee, Father in heaven, this child, smitten by disease. It is thine. From thee this innocent spirit came, and to thee must it return. But, O God, quench not yet this light of our dwelling. Spare the fond hopes bound up in this precious life, and let the bitter cup of bereavement pass from us. But thy will be done! Let not our natural affections, which thou hast done so much to bless, prove stronger than our faith. If thou art about to summon hence this little one, who has come hither, an angel from heaven, we pray

that for us it may not have come in vain, that the message of love and faith which it has brought may be inscribed forever upon our hearts. Like little children, may we be humble and confiding, and rely upon a strength greater than our own. Though we lose our dearest earthly treasures, may we gain the enduring riches of that grace which cleanses the heart, and strengthens faith, and nourishes those hopes which take hold on heaven.

FOR A FRIEND DANGEROUSLY ILL.

FATHER of mercies! from thee alone cometh all hope. To thee our inmost souls lie open. Thou hearest the prayers that are springing there, beyond all power of utterance, for our suffering friend. Thou knowest how ardently we desire that this sickness may not be unto death, that thy blessing may descend upon the means used for the restoration of thy servant, and give success to the efforts of human skill. O spare *him* that *he* may recover strength. Turn our sorrow into joy. Give unto us the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Let thy servant live and bless thy name.

AT THE MEETING OF FRIENDS.

EVER merciful and indulgent Parent, we realize that thy watchful eye is ever upon us, and that while thou seest our wants, thou art ever ready to supply them. Continue to bless us with thy kind care, and so influence our hearts that we may not forget thy benefits.

O may we be grateful to thee, that thou hast

permitted us once more to meet together. We thank thee that thou hast been with us during our separation, and hast guarded us from harm. We praise thee that thy love has ever attended and blessed us, and thy mercy has pardoned our many transgressions. And especially may we thank thee, that, with friendships unchanged, we are again in each other's society.

We realize that to thee, O Father, we are indebted for friends and all the pleasures of friendship and love. And here together may we render that tribute of gratitude which we owe thee. May our renewed intercourse be hallowed by a sense of thy sleepless care and unfailing love. Let thy sanctifying spirit be with us. May we feel its holy influence in our hearts, cleansing them of all impurity, and consecrating them to friendship, to love, and to thee.

Lord, we are thine, the children of thy care—the recipients of thy bounties. As such, may we strive to serve and adore thee. Thou art our Father. While we love thy excellence, as children may we strive to imitate it. And remembering how Jesus, the living manifestation of thy goodness, the friend of sinners, revealed thee to us, may we endeavor to walk as he walked. May we love him as he loved us, and each other as he loved the world. May we befriend one another as he befriended humanity. And as his goodness is endearing him more and more to the hearts of his disciples, so may ours endear us more and more to each other.

Father in heaven, watch over us. Keep our tongues from evil, and our lips from speaking guile. Fill our hearts with thy goodness, and quicken our affections by thy love; so that all

our emotions may blend together as one; all our thoughts flow in the harmony of affection; and our words be like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

Permit us often to meet in thy fear; and at last, when this world, with its cares and ills, its transient joys and fading splendors, shall have passed away, may we, and all for whom Jesus died, stand around thy throne in heaven, to praise and adore thee forever and ever. Amen.

FOR A FAMILY WHEN ONE OF ITS MEMBERS IS ABOUT LEAVING HOME.

O LORD, we adore thee as the Father of all the families of the earth, and the Author of all the mercies we enjoy. We give thanks to thy name for the kind care thou hast extended over us, and that we have lived in security and happiness under the broad wing of thy protection. Daily hast thou opened thy hand to supply our wants, and cheered us by thy benignant smiles. Long have we lived in union and love, and taken sweet counsel together. Happy has been our communion, and rich the enjoyment which has gladdened our hearts. But, O Lord, it has pleased thee to order, that for a season one shall be separated from us. Prepare us, we beseech thee, for the separation; and grant, that we may part in peace. May we be comforted by the reflection that thou art everywhere present; and that, though absent from each other, we shall all have thy protecting care, and be led by the hand of thy mercy. Be pleased to spare our lives to prosper us in our efforts, and permit us to meet again in the enjoyment of health and peace.

[If the father is to leave, use the following.]

Great God, may thy special blessing attend the labors of thy servant while separated from his home. Preserve him from sickness, calamity and sin; and may he pursue without weariness his duties, and be brought back to this peaceful dwelling with a glad and thankful heart. And during the period of his absence, may these children be dutiful, kind and affectionate, and demean themselves as becometh those in their condition.

[If a child to attend school, use the following.]

Heavenly Father, may thy youthful servant employ aright the opportunities now to be enjoyed for acquiring knowledge and preparing for the duties of life. May *he* be attentive to *his* studies, and realize the importance of making a diligent use of time. May *he* be obedient to *his* instructors, and listen to the counsel they may give. Keep *him*, O God, from the ways of sin, and from evil of every kind. May *he* remember the deep anxiety felt by *his* parents for *his* temporal and spiritual welfare, and be stimulated by that to be dutiful and kind.

[If a son to learn a trade, use the following.]

O God, be with him who is to be removed from our midst, that he may be fitted for the business of life. O may he be diligent, obedient, and faithful; anxious to acquire knowledge and be useful to his employer. May he be treated kindly; suffered not to be idle; guarded from the company of the vicious, and conducted in the ways of virtue. O may he keep thy law, and delight in thy worship.

[If a father or son to go to sea, use the following.]

Supreme Lord, the sea is thine; thou dost hold

it in the hollow of thy hand, and thou art the support of those who go down to it in ships, and do business in great waters. Be with and bless him who is about to leave the quiet and security of home, and be exposed to the dangers and hard. ships of the mighty deep. O wilt thou watch over him, and be his guardian and support. When the waves lift up their voice, and the heavens are filled with darkness, and the tempest rages, great God, who art mightier than the winds and the waters, and makest the clouds thy chariot and ridest upon the wings of the storm, guard him and his companions in peril; still the tempest, and grant them deliverance. May he not forget thee, or be unmindful of his obligations. May he be watchful and prayerful, and be guarded from sin and every evil. Preserve him in health and happiness, and let thy blessing be his portion forever.

[Close with the following.]

Supreme Guardian, may we yet enjoy many years of happiness in each other's society. Help us, wherever we may be, to feel that thou art our support, and the giver of every good and perfect gift. Make us duly thankful for all thy blessings; keep us in thy love and fear; and finally receive us to that world where parting shall be unknown; and thine shall be all the praise forever. Amen.

SUITABLE FOR A CHILD.

O THOU, who art the God of the fathers, and of the children, wilt thou assist a feeble child in drawing near to thee in humble thanks for thy many and great mercies in times past, and in earnest prayer for all needful favors in time to come. May I, in future, think less of the world, and more of thee, and of the great duties

and comforts of religion. Help me to resign myself wholly to thy service; to love thee with all my heart; and, while I live, to obey thee in all things. May I strive to honor my parents; to love my brothers and sisters; to be kind to my playmates; respectful to my superiors, and generous towards my inferiors. Forbid that I should ever speak a false word, or do a wrong deed. May I take delight in going to church, and to the Sabbath school; and in reading and understanding the Bible. Help me, O God, to love my Saviour, and to be more and more like him. May I never forget that he loved little children, and took them in his arms, and blessed them, and said, Of such is the kingdom of heaven. O may this assurance lead me to be heavenly in all my thoughts, and words, and actions. And be thou entreated, O Lord, to grant every favor that I ask for myself to all who are young, that great may be the peace of children everywhere, now and forever. Amen.

THANKS AT THE TABLE.

Bountiful God! the eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season. Grant that we may have grateful hearts for the provisions of thy hand which are now before us, and let them nourish our frail bodies, that we may have strength to pursue our respective avocations. Keep us in thy love, and finally save us, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

O Lord, thou art the Giver of every good and perfect gift, and to thee are we indebted for the food of which we are about to partake. May it strengthen our frail bodies, and awaken emotions of gratitude in our hearts; and thine shall be all the praise forever. Amen.

Father of lights, enable us to receive these gifts of thy bounty with thankful hearts, and spend the strength they impart in thy service. Forgive our sins, and save us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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